

# 2d ARTIST

Concept Art, Digital & Matte Painting Magazine  
Issue 044 August 2009

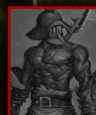
## INTERVIEWS

Carlos Cabrera



## ARTICLES

The Sketchbook of Darren Yeow



## GALLERIES

Nathaniel West, Andreas Rocha  
& Amaud Valette, plus more!



# BRUSHING UP!

CREATE BRUSHES FROM SCRATCH AND DABBLE WITH OUR FREE CUSTOM-MADE SET!



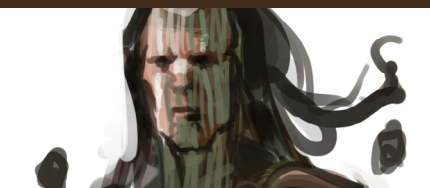
## FUTURISTIC ENVIRONMENT

Alex Broeckel shows us how to create a moody environment scene using Google SketchUp as a tool to aid 2D painting in Photoshop



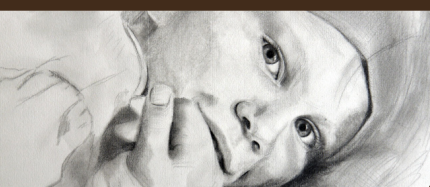
## ORGANIC AND INORGANIC CUSTOM BRUSHES

Carlos Cabrera kick starts off our brand new custom brushes tutorial series by creating brushes for rock, metal and stone textures



## VISUAL BRAINSTORMING

Bruno Werneck teaches us how to brainstorm, building upon a decided theme and character type, helping us to improve our character designs



## BEGINNERS GUIDE TO PAINTING

Nykolai Aleksander delves deeper into the tools of Photoshop in the second part of our tutorial series for beginners to digital painting





## Editorial

**Issue 44** – droopy drawers, all the fours, open two doors, magnum! (Nope, I haven't gone crazy - although that is debatable these days; I just wondered what the bingo number calling nickname for 44 was. [Big grin]) OK, so 44 issues of 2DArtist since we started in 2006 ... how time flies! Thank you everyone who has supported us all these years, and welcome to those who are just joining us – we hope you enjoy the ride!

What's in store this sunny August then? (Yep, we actually have some sun – I kid thee not!) First of all, let's discuss tutorials, as I know that's what most of you are here for. We have two new tutorial artists with us this month actually: **Alex Broeckel**, who you'll have seen in our Gallery recently, and **Bruno Werneck** who featured in an artist interview in the 2DArtist October 2007 issue have both joined the author panel. So let's start at the beginning to find out what we're up to:

**Alex Broeckel** brings us his interpretation of a painting created with the help of Google SketchUp as a base image to give some perspective guides and compositional help to his image creation process – speeding things up nicely. We gave our artists free reign over subject matter with these paintover tutorials, so you should see some interesting paintings emerge over the next few months! Click to **p.64** to find out how Alex went about his Google SketchUp-to-Photoshop workflow. Interestingly, Alex uses a completely different approach to last month's artist, so we're keen to see how next month's tutorial unfolds – looks to be a promising series!

**Bruno Werneck** joins us in the discussion of visual brainstorming for character designs on **p.82**. Inspired by a road trip through the mountains, Bruno talks us through and shows us how to go about some successful brainstorming to get the best out of your character concepts. The idea behind this series is that industry artists teach us some professional tips to creating better character designs. Stick with us for next month's exploration of speed painting and concept design with Darren Yeow.

We also have **Carlos Cabrera** back with us in top form in part one of our brand new tutorial series on creating custom brushes. This time around we're giving artists specific topics that are suited to their strengths, so we've asked Carlos to teach us how to create custom brushes for rock and stone textures. Check out **p.76** for custom brush creation tips, as well as a whole set of **free brushes** just for our readers, created for you by Carlos! He's also painted the stunning image that you'll see on this month's cover using his new brush creations. Superb!

**Nykolai Aleksander** is also back with us again, bringing us part two of our beginner's guide to digital painting in Photoshop. We're still talking technical right now, in preparation for the painting that is due to come, and Nykolai has been working night and day on these tutorials for you, teaching us all she knows. So Wacom's at the ready and thinking caps on – pop on over to **p.92** to follow on from where we left off last month.

Well, there's not enough room left to tell you everything else that's great about this issue, so I'll let you discover for yourselves ... Be sure to check out our interview with **Carlos Cabrera** on **p.6** – absolutely stunning artwork there, Carlos is a real pleasure to work with and chat to! We peek

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### About us

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### Free Stuff!

Wherever you see this symbol, click it to download resources, extras!



inside **Darren Yeow**'s sketchbook on **p.22** to satisfy our ever increasing nosiness and intrigue, and **Roy Stein** brings us an insightful "making of" on **p.106** talking us through the workflow used to paint recent image, *A New Bride*. A really great issue, if I do say so myself! And on my final note, we are waving farewell to the Stylized Challenge this month, so check out **p.44** for the final chapter, with six making of articles from the last two months' winners.

Thank you for checking out this latest issue. Enjoy and come back for more next month! **Ed.**





## Setting up your PDF reader

For optimum viewing of the magazine it is recommended that you have the latest Acrobat Reader installed.

You can download it for free here: [DOWNLOAD!](#)

To view the many double-page spreads featured in 2D Artist magazine, you can set the reader to display 'two-up', which will show double-page spreads as one large landscape image:

1. Open the magazine in Reader;
2. Go to the **View** menu, then **Page display**;
3. Select **Two-up Continuous**, making sure that **Show Cover Page** is also selected.

# Get the most out of your Magazine!

If you're having problems viewing the double-page spreads that we feature in this magazine, follow this handy little guide on how to set up your PDF reader!





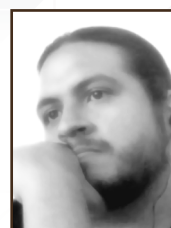
# Contributing Artists

Every month many artists around the world contribute to **3DCreative** and **2DArtist** magazines. Here you can find out a bit about them. If you would like to be a part of **3DCreative** or **2DArtist** magazine, please contact:  
[lynette@3dtotal.com](mailto:lynette@3dtotal.com)



## Carlos César Cabrera

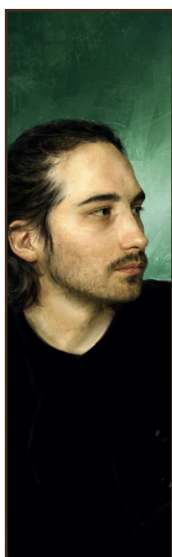
Argentina-based digital artist, concept artist and illustrator. He's been doing concept art and character designs for videogame companies in Argentina and around the world for about six years, during which time he's launched a successful free video tutorial series, *Watch and Learn*, for the community. He's been doing art all his life, since a child, gathering a few good skills from his art direction and digital painting.  
<http://www.carloscabrera.com.ar>  
[carloscabrera@gmail.com](mailto:carloscabrera@gmail.com)



## Nykolai Aleksander

Born in Germany in 1978, Nykolai moved to England in 1999, and currently lives in South Africa with her husband. She's been painting digitally since 2002, and works as a freelance illustrator for both private clients and companies.

<http://www.admemento.com>  
[x@admemento.com](mailto:x@admemento.com)



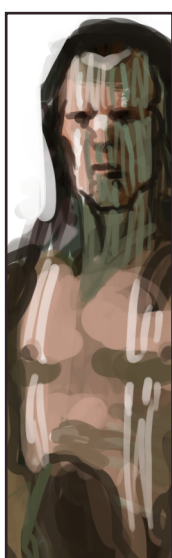
## Darren Yeow

27-year old self-taught illustrator, originally hailing from Adelaide, has worked as a concept artist, user interface designer and art director in video game companies for the past four years, and currently lives in Melbourne. Outside his full-time role as an in-house concept artist working on next-gen games, he tutors hopeful young artists, works on commissioned freelance projects, and is writing a book for those wishing to pursue a career in concept art.  
[darren@stylus-monkey.com](mailto:darren@stylus-monkey.com)



## Bruno Werneck

He began pursuing formal artistic training when he was given a scholarship in 1996 to study at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, receiving his degree from Columbia College Chicago in 2002. Bruno has recently started his own business 'filmpaint.com' and moved to Los Angeles, California to assist production studios with visual development and matte painting. Among his recent clients are Blur Studios, Psyop, Zoic, Wizards of The Coast, Cisco and many others  
[www.brunowerneck.com](http://www.brunowerneck.com) | [contact@brunowerneck.com](mailto:contact@brunowerneck.com)



## Would You Like to Contribute to 3DCreative or 2DArtist Magazine?

We are always looking for tutorial artists, gallery submissions, potential interviewees, "making of" writers, and more. For more information, please send examples of your work, or a link to your online portfolio to:

[lynette@3dtotal.com](mailto:lynette@3dtotal.com)

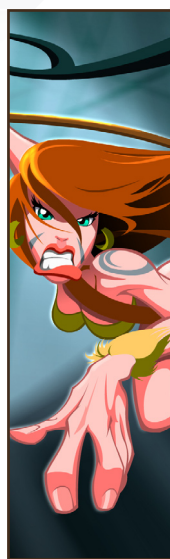
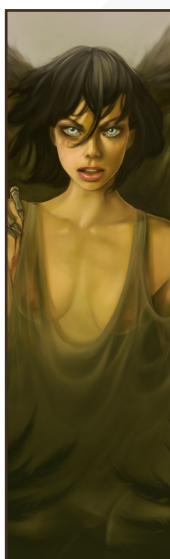




## Roy Stein

A VFX artist and illustrator, graduate of Bezalel Academy of Art and Design, Jerusalem and the Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore. He has worked for several animation studios in the U.S.A., U.K., Israel and Thailand, and has recently opened up Studio Orso, a boutique VFX studio in Central Tel Aviv, Israel where he spends most of time doing 3D and painting.

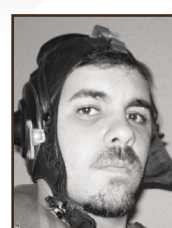
<http://www.studiorso.com>  
roy@studiorso.com



## Felipe Fernández Morell

Studied art in Montevideo, Uruguay. He then worked freelance in Barcelona in different media – from publicity to editorial to web. He's currently working as a production and concept artist in the games industry.

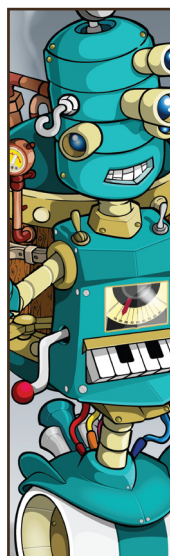
<http://www.ffilustracion.com>  
contactos@ffilustracion.com



## Arturo Aguirre

An artist from Guatemala, currently working in advertising as a concept artist/illustrator and is looking to expand into the entertainment industry – where his true passion lies. He loves to draw his own characters and participate in online contests. When he's not working on artworks, he enjoys spending time with his lovely British wife and beautiful baby girl.

<http://artinastudio.blogspot.com>  
artinastudio@gmail.com



## Richard G.D. Baker


An English/Grenadian who dreamt of being a stuntman, but for whatever reason ended up drawing like crazy. To everyone's surprise this led him to finding work as a freelance cartoonist. He will soon leave England to live with his girlfriend, Michelle in Australia where he hopes to continue his artistic endeavors, play cricket and thrash around in go-karts! To relax, he likes to re-watch *Firefly* and *Serenity*.

<http://www.cirqus.com>  
cirqus@cirqus.com



Mechanic | Image by Nathaniel West





**“Today an artist can get  
a 12 inch Cintiq and work  
from a local coffee  
shop with his laptop. That  
is a freedom we didn’t  
have before”**

Carlos Cabrera is a freelance illustrator and concept artist whose portfolio ranges from comic and book illustration through to games development. He has recently collaborated on the FEAR PC expansion, as well as starting work on his own video game project

**CARLOS  
CABRERA**



# CARLOS CABRERA

Perhaps, Carlos, you could start by telling us a little about yourself, your background and how you came to work in the industry?

I started to do illustrations as far back as I can remember, but have been working commercially for about 12 or 14 years now. I'm very grateful to have found my space in the entertainment business, although I don't rule out the possibility of doing a movie project in the future.

In Argentina it is pretty hard (if not impossible) to find a good art institute so I had to study by myself (best school ever!) with comics and any art books I could find. Since the internet popped up all over the world I've been able to develop myself as a professional artist.

When I was 22 years old I began to work at a local video game startup here in Buenos Aires, where I got access to a Wacom tablet (back in the day it was impossible to buy one of these when they first came out; they were really expensive even in the USA). Using a Wacom was a blessing for me so I used to stay after hours just to practice with it.



The first project I was involved with was a GameBoy Advance game in which I did lots of pixel and regular art. In all the years I worked for that company I learned a lot from practicing every day. After the project was finished I moved to work with TimeGate Studios when

they were just starting on *Section 8* (an AAA game still under development - <http://www.joinsection8.com/>)

I learned how to work for an American company through TimeGate, which was something







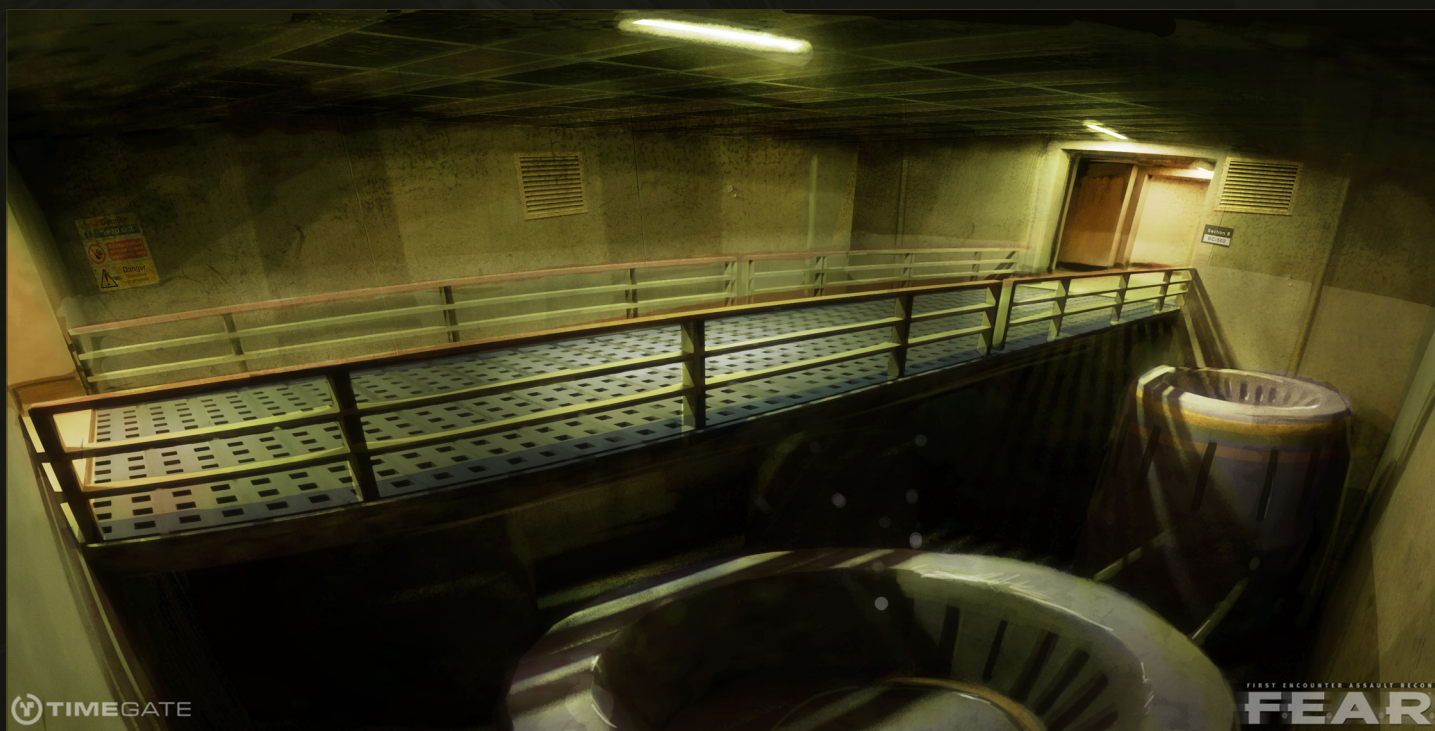




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**F.E.A.R.**





completely different for me because of the level of quality they required and the deadlines they usually worked within. I was amazed by that!

While all this was happening I kept up my freelancing work for local companies and startups (I even helped a comic book artist!). My work relation with TimeGate was growing to the point where they actually offered me the chance to travel so that I could work with them in the USA for a whole year. I couldn't take that offer because of family problems, but we kept working together. During that last project we began working on the *FEAR* PC expansion and on some internal projects. During that time I also worked on several illustrations for Privateer Press, wrote a couple of tutorials for some textbooks from China and collaborated with Bobby Chiu on a publication.

Right now I'm working with my brother on our first video game project. We are really excited about creating a company and all the steps involved over the next few months, but I can't give much detail about it because it's a work in progress. All I can say is that we are trying to go back to better times in video game history, when the gameplay and quality overruled "fashion"







in games, which should be enough to give you guys goose bumps!

It sounds as though you have had an interesting career path so far, but what are the main advantages and disadvantages of working remotely for companies? And is your video game a full time project now?

One advantage is the different time zones between countries. With this you can be working all day while your client is at the other side of the world having a good night's sleep. First thing in the morning he gets an email with the work done and that's something in-house art teams can't compete with most of the time.

On the other hand, I get more freedom to work around my priorities and be able to meet all my clients' deadlines without much effort. The advantages are many yes, but there are also big responsibilities. Freelance work gives you a direct link with the client; there are no supervisors, no art directions, and no bosses in the middle. It's you, your work and the client; no excuses.

I don't find many disadvantages in working offshore. The fact you can actually handle the









FIRST ENCOUNTER ASSAULT RECON  
**FEAR**



amount of clients, plus the work flow, the way you want to is priceless. Maybe the only big disadvantage I can bring to the table is the lack of continuous clients. You can spend a whole week without having a client, but you are usually finishing something else so I still really enjoy working offshore.

About the video game project; no it's not full time work yet but we are slowly making more time for it. We have an amazing product in the works here with this video game, so there's no turning back for us now.

You have a number of pieces relating to the video game *FEAR*. Can you describe what this was like as a project and the challenges it presented?

It was a very interesting and challenging project because doing background art has never really been my strong point. Generally



speaking, I'd rather make characters, monsters or design weapons. That day I remember the TimeGate art director contacted me, asking if I was interested in working freelance on a few

backgrounds that they needed. He sent me an example and that very same day I was up all night working and practicing, trying to match the quality they sent me.



After I sent them the outcome (a pretty horrible background if I look at it today) the TimeGate art director gave me the chance of working on the project with them, so we started with a set of three backgrounds. The first one took me the whole day and after his feedback I had lots of errors to fix, but the second one came up much faster and after that I was delivering approximately one finished background per day before starting on the next one. I was a background vending machine!

On many of the backgrounds I used the help of 3D software to avoid dealing with the perspective and to get a quick light and shadow base to work with. My 3D skills are pretty much nonexistent, so I was limited to boxes and pipes with the software (nothing fancy). The work I did for *FEAR* was varied; I did backgrounds, characters and weapons. It was pretty good fun!

There is a wide variety of work in your portfolio but which rank among your favourites and why? As I mentioned before, I love to illustrate characters more than backgrounds, but what I







really love more than anything is (when I have the chance) to work on monsters or creatures. Maybe it's because it is something much more creative and I don't have to think that much about the clothes or the human anatomy. Creating a monster or creature is something that comes completely from your imagination;

**“Today an artist can get a 12 inch Cintiq and work from a local coffee shop with his laptop. That is a freedom we didn't have before”**

you don't see yourself limited with anatomy or art references. A specific story also helps the artistic job flow faster and you can get a better result in less time.

I understand what you mean about creatures being a great stimulant for the imagination, but it nevertheless remains difficult to come up with wholly original designs. Which creatures have you seen, either in films or video games, that you really feel are quite original?

The Faun of *Pan's Labyrinth* is one of my favorite creatures; another is the *Cloverfield*



monster. I really enjoy the work and quality of Guillermo Del Toro; I believe he is a great visionary and one of the few directors out there designing his own characters. In the video game field I really loved the *Fable 2* designs and obviously, the monsters of *God of War* (I became addicted to that one!)

Tools like Photoshop and Painter are continually developing new features but where do you feel the main advances have been in digital art over the last few years?

I believe something to highlight should be the hardware and software growth in the last ten years, which has been enormous. Today we have the chance of using digital pens, tablet PCs and pen displays: back in the days all this stuff was just in our imagination. To give you a quick example: for the first digital pen I used, the pen was actually wired to the drawing area and the drawing area was the size of a credit card. We have come a long way since then!

Today an artist can get a 12 inch Cintiq and work from a local coffee shop with his laptop. That is a freedom we didn't have before. The other side of the story is that a lot of new artists don't even know about the traditional ways (pencils, oils, acrylics) and that shows up in their final work (always).





CARRERA







Most companies out there want the traditional look on their digital illustrations. Old school my friend!

Many of your environment designs show accurate perspective in some of the details such as the floor panelling. Do you use 3D scenes often as an aid to your concept process?

Yes, I use basic 3D on lots of my illustrations. My knowledge of 3D is basic to medium and the delivery time is almost one illustration per day so I can't spend much of my time on a complex 3D model because I have to work on it later.

A lot of times I get comments from artists asking if they should use a render as a base for their illustrations and if it is "cheating" and will some companies look at it the wrong way. My answer is always the same: if a company gets a quality piece of work in a short span of time, they don't care if you used 3D, family photos or you painted it with oils. It is a new tool that makes our work easier, why shouldn't we use it? In other illustrations I also used ZBrush, for example, to create stone textures or even planets!

## **"The best thing to do is to try new techniques until you find the one you are comfortable with"**

You talk about speed, which is an obvious asset necessary in your line of work, but apart from using 3D what painting techniques have you developed to help quicken your character design process?

One simple way of doing it is working on an initial sketch with the Photoshop "Lasso" tool (look it up, its right there!) The main idea of this technique is to "draw" a selection of what we want to paint and with a simple brush we can quickly paint inside that selection. After we have the shape completely filled with our base color, we use the same lasso tool to select the shadows and we paint them with a darker color.



At the end we do the same for the lights; this way we have a very quick sketch with a superior quality that would have taken us twice the time to do in the traditional way. This technique is handy for me, whilst some other artists would rather do the sketch in pen and color. The best thing to do is to try new techniques until you find the one you are comfortable with. It's all about having good quality and working fast!

Of the other artists out there, whose work has inspired you the most?

That's a tough one. I have a long list of artists that inspire me and I'm going to make the effort to name a few: I believe Emrah Elmasli is one of my favorites; I really envy the way he works the color and design on his illustrations. Another one whose work I follow very close is Svetlin Velinov - I still don't get how he can paint like that with Photoshop! It's amazing! And of course

I'm influenced a lot by the style of Brom, Bisley, Frank Miller and Chad Townsend.

What is it, do you think, that sets the good concept artist apart from the average? And what do you feel are the key ways to improve ones work?

I believe I'm stilling looking for that answer myself [Laughs]! What helped me this last year was basically delivering projects fast and with high quality. Generally speaking it takes a couple of weeks for any artist to deliver a high quality painting, illustration or anything. I try to do the same in half the time. It's also a good move to show your work in any forum, book or magazine you can find.

Having your own website with your portfolio online is one of the steps that any artist can do. The world is full of clients who are waiting to see





**“The best thing to do to set yourself apart from the bunch is to get your work out there and work every day on your speed and quality”**

examples of your work! You just need to show them! Companies are always on the hunt for new artists and they usually have subscriptions to different specialized magazines, forums or websites. Back in the days I remember getting an email from Microsoft Games to work in-house in one of their *MechWarrior* projects, but I couldn't at the time for personal reasons. I remember the project art director and some of Microsoft artists had seen my work and tutorials on the web.

If Microsoft choose to make contact with a person on the other side of the globe to make a

work offer, I don't understand how some artist can't take advantage of the opportunities they have in their own home countries (I'm looking at you, USA citizens!) where companies like this are two blocks away from where they live.

To sum up: the best thing to do to set yourself apart from the bunch is to get your work out there and work every day on your speed and quality.

And a quick pointer for everyone who wants to get better: focus on quality and render skill. That's a basic exercise I always recommend;

search for some illustration from your favorite artist (you can start by going to <http://www.carloscabrera.com.ar/>) grab a bit of that illustration (can be a hand, a leg, a face) and try to reproduce it every day.

If you do an illustration in the morning and one at the night, I can guarantee that without even noticing your final render will have improved considerably in just a few weeks. Peace!

Thanks for taking the time to talk to 2DArtist Carlos!

Thank you sir for giving me the opportunity of showing everyone what I do. Speaking of which, I invite you all to drop by my website and enjoy some of my new work and tutorials. I promise you that the free “Watch and Learn” series will come back in a short while for the artistic community to enjoy out there! Thanks!

## Carlos Cabrera

For more work by this artist please visit:

<http://www.carloscabrera.com.ar/>

Or contact them at:

[carloscabrera@gmail.com](mailto:carloscabrera@gmail.com)

Interviewed by: Richard Tilbury





# LEARN HOW TO DESIGN ENVIRONMENTS FROM THE PROS



James Clyne

“ James Clyne is a master when it comes to translating his inner worlds of gigantic structures and machines. His smart construction approach, based on a very open abstract process, gives to his productions a very original feel unseen anywhere else. ”

- Sparth

Concept designer/illustrator



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DESIGN

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# SKETCHBOOK OF DARREN YEOW

From anatomy studies to the study of Masters, we delve into the sketchbook of talented artist Darren Yeow.



## SKETCHBOOK OF DARREN YEOW

### ANATOMY STUDIES

This page of sketches is an example of an anatomical study sheet (Fig.01). It is not intended to be aesthetically pleasing in any way, it is simply a quick revision exercise of jotting down information that you have been learning in summary form.

It was handled with pen and paper, and it took roughly half an hour to execute. It was a revision exercise so there wasn't any reference to existing textbooks or anatomical sheets – just me, a pen and a piece of paper!

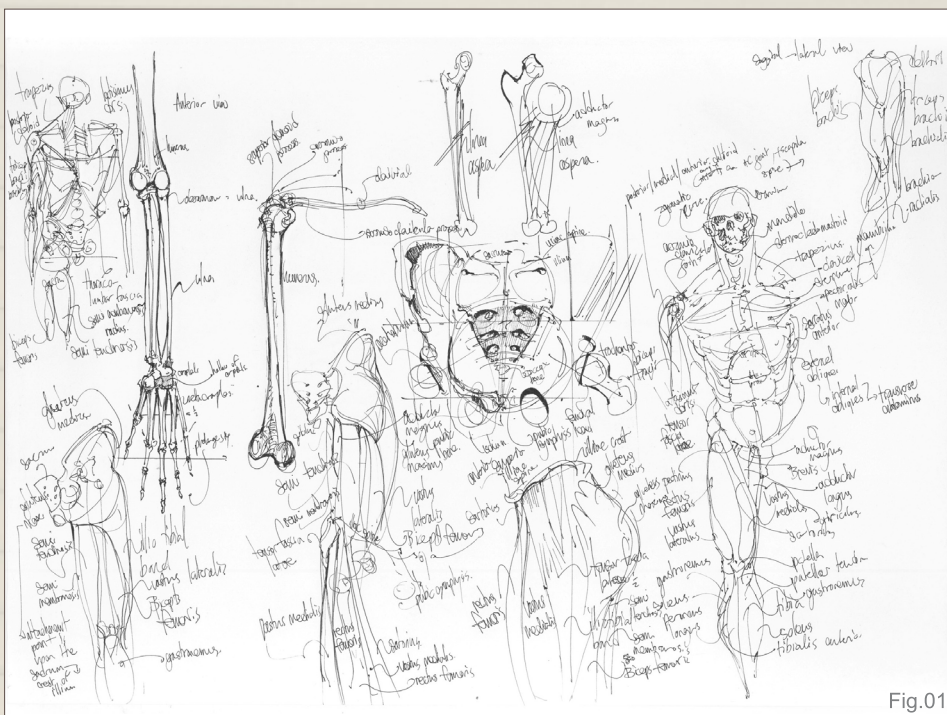


Fig.01

### MICHELANGELO STUDY

This was a study I did in order to tackle two things: to revise my anatomical knowledge of the back muscles (which incidentally receive far less fanfare than those of the opposing forward facing muscles of the torso), and to study the aesthetics of Michelangelo's own studies for his Libyan Sibyl (Fig.02).

This was a piece done in graphite on some regular copy paper, and served as a tutorial piece that I put on a couple of forums to demonstrate the use of grids to plot major landmarks to allow for correct proportions.

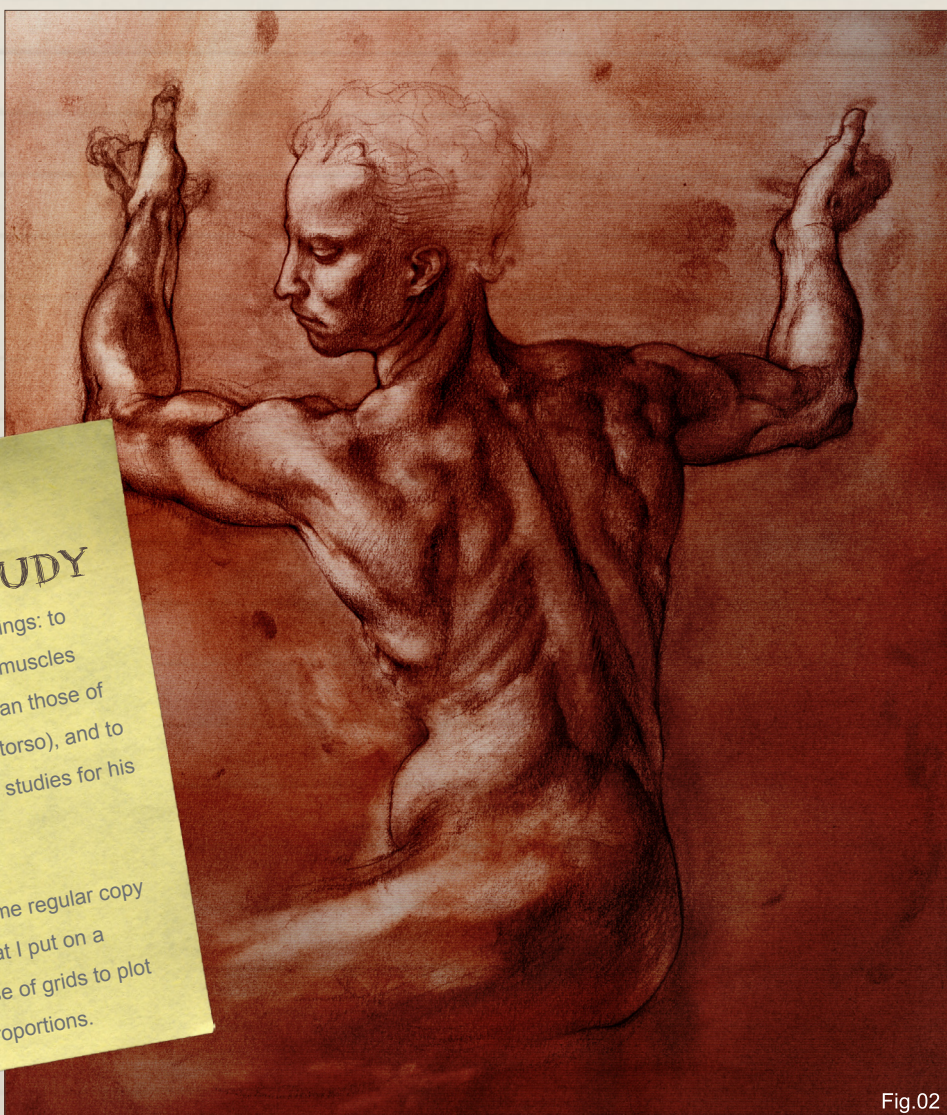


Fig.02



## MONA LISA STUDY

This was another study of a Master's work (Fig.03). The Mona Lisa has always been a source of fascination for me, not because of its notoriety or its execution, but because I honestly didn't think it was a very special piece – especially when compared to many other works I have seen. When I undertook the piece, because of the timeframe it took to study and copy, I gained a richer appreciation for the subtlety of the painting. I also learned a great deal of patience copying the famous dame's facial expression, which even now eludes the quality of the original – her almost expressionless face that hints at something just beyond comprehension. I think mine is a little too happy?





## THE MAN-MADE

This is a relatively common looking page of sketches from my pads, concentrating on line work, readability and form (**Fig.04**). This page deals mainly with man-made objects, or a fusion of man-made objects with organic composition, which naturally flow out of the stroke of whim, rather than purpose.

Of all my different rendering styles and types of work I do, I tend to enjoy the low-tech feedback of pencil or pen on paper, the immediacy and the rawness of the lines which are undoctored, the feel of fighting the friction against the surface of the paper, trying to create meaningful marks while simultaneously emptying the mind of preconceived notions – an aspiration I probably don't achieve most of the time, although I duly try.

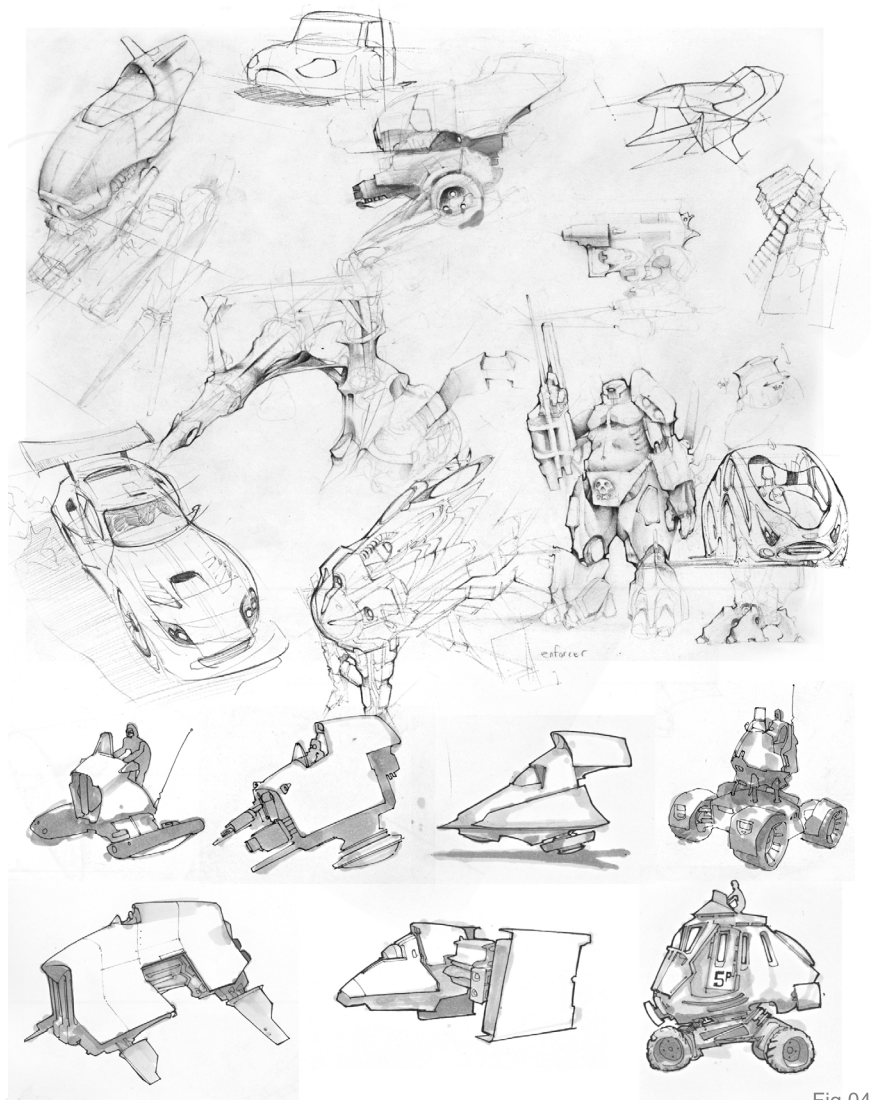
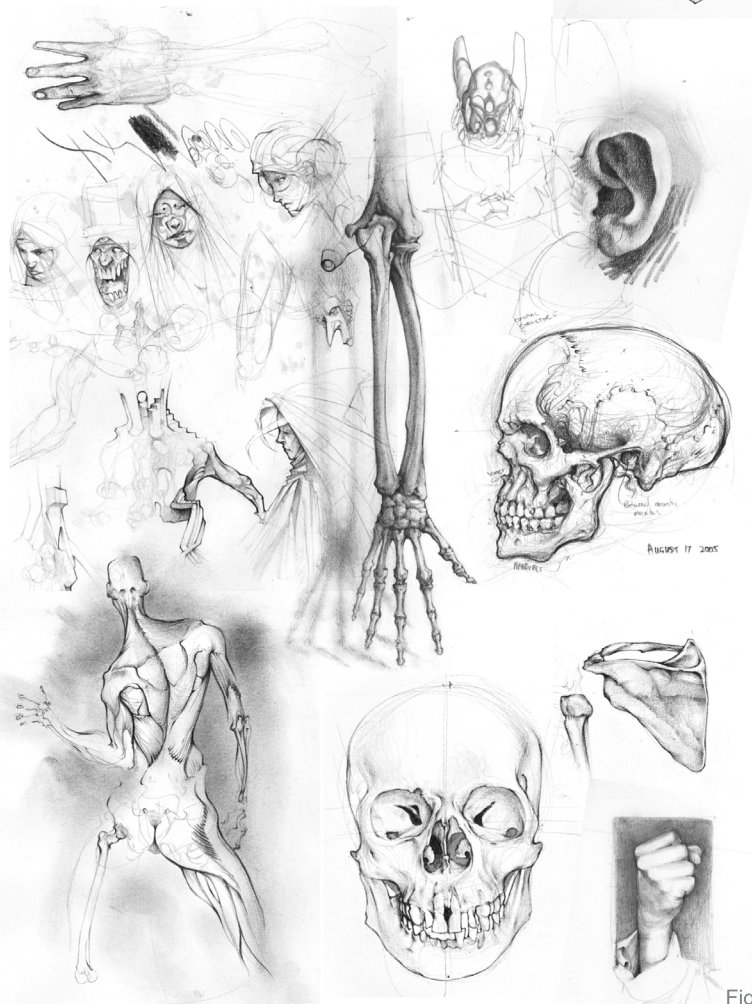


Fig.04



## MORE ANATOMY

Here is another page of anatomy studies (**Fig.05**). I find the human body to be an endless source of configuration and inspiration – on the surface of it all a beauty so simple and balanced, and yet holding a quality so nuanced and difficult to achieve.

This sketchbook page holds the typical level of rendering I like to imbue on my studies; any less shortchanges the study of form, any more becomes prohibitive on that most precious of resources: time.

Fig.05



## SKETCHING WITH A CINTIQ

About a year ago I invested in a 12WX. I was a little hesitant because of the price point, the possibility of lag on my underpowered PC, and whether it would bring any major advantage to just scanning my sketches in and rendering with a regular Intuos tablet. Let me tell you: there is a slight learning curve coming from Intuos to Cintiq, but my workflow efficiency has really improved markedly and I mostly skip the penciling stage for most of my work now. These are just a couple of purely digital sketches that took probably half the time that it would have taken had I used a combination of sketching manually, and then rendering digitally (**Fig.06**). On this particular sketch “sheet” I was concentrating on the form and light source to define the subject matter.



Fig.06



## CHARACTERS

These two characters were done for various indie games – in both, there is marked attention given to their silhouettes as well as form (Fig.07a – b). With these types of sketches, I try to give a sense of character through their mannerisms, postures and accompanying accoutrements.

As an aside, working on some low paying indie games is actually something I really enjoy doing from time to time; it helps me bolster my portfolio and gives a little back to a community from whence I came. The money I generally receive for these “commissions” is generally barely enough to pay for the amount of electricity I use to power my laptop while undertaking said commission, but they do give a degree of freedom that is hard to solicit while working at a big company.

These were created with rough sketches and rendered in Photoshop. Regarding the feel of the pieces, I have never been one to pursue the digital aesthetic that screams, “Computer art!” I tend to prefer the look of graphite (or some other traditional media) to my images, and I achieve most of this by incorporating scans of whole pages toned with graphite (or paint or watercolor), and apply it digitally in my illustration program.



Fig.07a





Fig.07b



## VARIOUS SKETCHES

Here are some other exploratory sketches done for various companies and projects (**Fig.08**). Most of them were done to help determine the look and feel of a project, and I tend to enjoy these blue sky images the most, as opposed to working to a predefined style over which I have no real say – although I do gain a lot of satisfaction from nailing other styles that are not my own as well.

The top piece shown in **Fig.09** is a color sketch from a visual reference done entirely in Corel Painter. I didn't spend much time on the minute details, preferring to spread the focus across the whole image, giving it a nice not-quite-impressionistic feel to the piece. The lower two images of Fig.09 were more exploratory pieces for a previous soccer project I worked on.

In **Fig.10**, the top image was a piece I did while learning how to create textures. I enjoyed giving the piece a painterly feel whilst creating a pretty abstract looking piece. The image below in Fig.10 was an

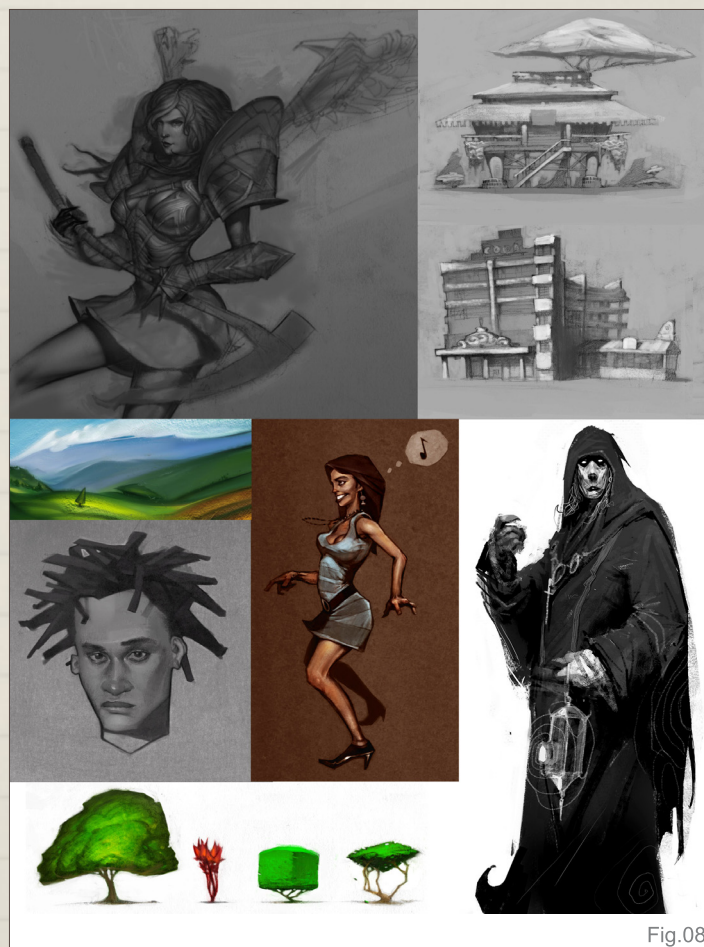


Fig.08

exercise about letting go and doing things as they occurred to me, not really worrying too much about detail, but about overall form and balance.

Well, I hope you've enjoyed my thoughts on some of my sketchbook pages and have hopefully picked up one or two interesting bits of information from all this. If you have any questions or comments please feel free to send me an email at. Until next month, keep drawing!

## Darren Yeow

For more from this artist contact them at:

darren@stylus-monkey.com



Fig.09

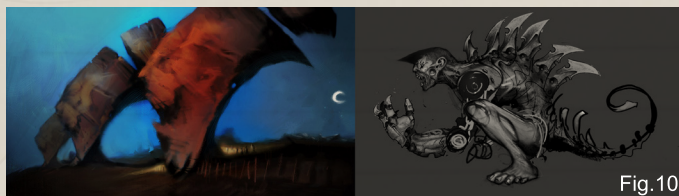


Fig.10



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# THE GALLERY

This Month we Feature artwork from:

Andreas Rocha

Aziz Maaqoul

Nathaniel West

Dona Vajgand

Serge Birault

Arnaud Valette

Krzysztof Bielenin

Irvin Rodriguez

Dmitry Mitsuk

Paul Gerrard





## A Farewell to Arms

Dmitry Mitsuk

(Above)

<http://mitsuk.cgsociety.org/gallery>

[mitsuk2003@list.ru](mailto:mitsuk2003@list.ru)

## Distant Lands

Andreas Rocha

(Below)

<http://www.andreasrocha.com>

[rocha.andreas@gmail.com](mailto:rocha.andreas@gmail.com)



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# Mechanic

Nathaniel West

<http://nathanielwest.net>

[nathaniel@nathanielwest.net](mailto:nathaniel@nathanielwest.net)







## The Emperor

Dona Vajgand

(Right)

<http://d-na.deviantart.com/>

[late.goodbye@gmail.com](mailto:late.goodbye@gmail.com)



## Birdy

Arnaud Valette

(Left)

<http://www.arnaudvalette.com>

[arnovalette@gmail.com](mailto:arnovalette@gmail.com)



# Sashimi's Revenge

Serge Birault

<http://www.sergebirault.com/>

[serge.birault@hotmail.fr](mailto:serge.birault@hotmail.fr)





## La Mirada

Irvin Rodriguez

(Right)

<http://irvinrodriguez.blogspot.com/>

[irvone@gmail.com](mailto:irvone@gmail.com)



## The Island of Medusa

Aziz Maaqoul

(Below)

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[azizmaaqoul@yahoo.fr](mailto:azizmaaqoul@yahoo.fr)





# The Chase

Paul Gerrard

<http://www.butterflysoldiers.com>

[pgerrard@butterflysoldiers.com](mailto:pgerrard@butterflysoldiers.com)

The Chase by Paul Gerrard is just one of a collection of stunning images from artists all around the world, created as part of Justin Lassen's Synaesthesia project. We catch up with Justin in next month's issue with a special artist-on-artist interview by Nykolai Aleksander, so check back in with us in September to witness more fantastic images like this one, which inspired the haunting sounds of Justin Lassen.







## Fly Away

Krzysztof Bielenin

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[kb@bielenin.com](mailto:kb@bielenin.com)







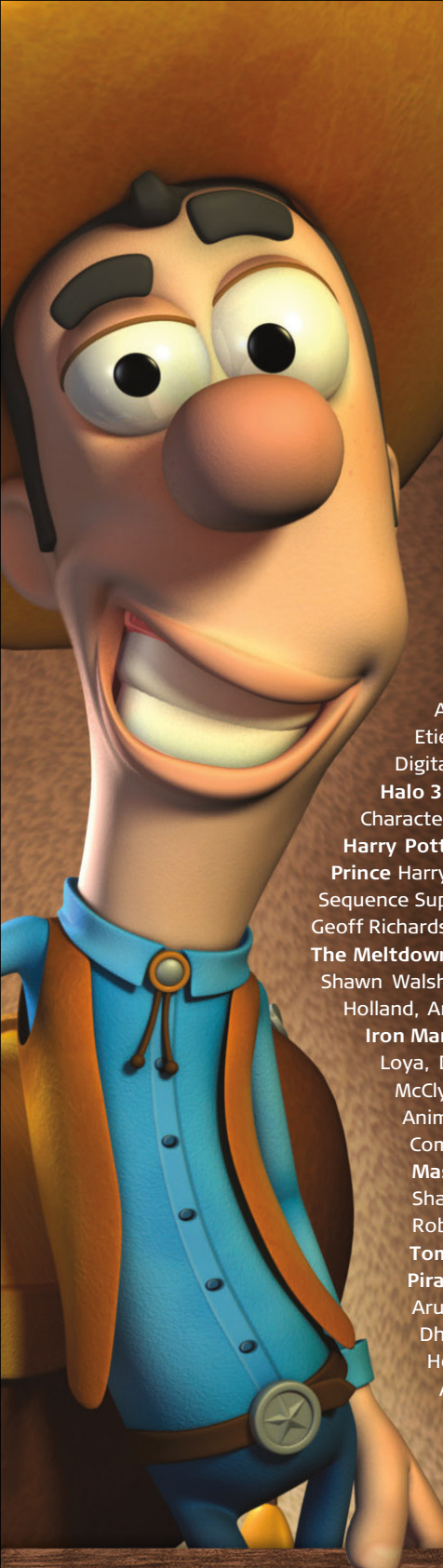


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the

# challenge

Welcome to the Challenge section of 2DArtist. Since December 2006 we have run a monthly challenge over on [ConceptArt.org](#) and in 2DArtist, giving the digital painting community the chance to enter for prizes from the [3DTotal](#) web shop, and for the opportunity to have their work featured in this very magazine.

After 31 successful challenges, we are now taking a break – much to the disappointment of all our regular challengers, I know, but we hope to bring the challenge feature back again in the near future, so we'll look forward to seeing you all there! In the meantime, please enjoy the last-for-a-while Stylised Challenge article, where you can see the winners of the final [Amazon Woman Warrior](#) challenge, alongside some great making of articles from not only this challenge, but last month's [Robots](#) one, too!

# Amazon

**Stylised Character challenge**





## The Stylised Animal Challenge – Amazon

Welcome to the final monthly challenge in 2DArtist magazine (for a while, at least).

For the past 31 months we have selected a topic, plucked from the strange imaginations of the 2DArtist team – and more often than not our challengers, too – and then posted images over on ConceptArt.org for all to see and use as inspiration. We have then relied on the minds and talents of the ConceptArt.org forum members to come up with the weird and wonderful stylised concepts that you will have seen over the past three years within our challenge articles.

We are sad to announce that the Amazon Warrior Woman is the final stylised challenge that we'll be running, but we certainly hope to come back with something new for everyone to get involved in as soon as we can, so for now we bring you the final stylised challenge article.

[Sob] To take us out in style we're not only showing the top ten winners from the Amazon challenge with the top three making of articles from last month's Robots challenge, but we're

**8th**



**Ray Williams - art1phat**  
 art1phat@hotmail.com  
<http://raysartonline.com/>

**10th**



**Angela - Angel Intheuk**  
[angel.b79@googlemail.com](mailto:angel.b79@googlemail.com)

**9th**



**Kai Schüttler - Gun Trouver**  
[kai.schuetzler@gmail.com](mailto:kai.schuetzler@gmail.com)  
<http://monoxide-art.blogspot.com>

also bringing you making ofs from our Amazon winners, too. So dry those eyes and indulge in a bit of community love as we wave farewell to our dear friend: the Stylised Challenge.

If you have any words of support, regret, annoyance, or any other thoughts about the ending of the Stylised Challenge, you are more than welcome to join our current and previous

**9th**



**Jason Smith - Macaruba**  
[info@macaruba.com](mailto:info@macaruba.com)  
<http://www.macaruba.com>

**9th**



**Leo - blackcherry**  
[leo@almasy.zzn.com](mailto:leo@almasy.zzn.com)  
<http://www.biscuitofdoom.net>

challengers and share your thoughts over on this forum thread. Thank you for your support!

## What have we been looking for?

Funny and humorous entries which break the subject down to its most recognisable components. We ask our challengers to emphasise these characteristics in whichever



7th



**Sean Thurlow - Trashy**  
deadite44@hotmail.com  
<http://trashyworks.blogspot.com/>

6th



**Richard G.D. Baker - The Antartican**  
cirqus@cirqus.com  
<http://www.cirqus.com>

ways they think best, and to render their stylised/abstract/cartoon masterpieces to share with the world through the electronic pages of ConceptArt.org and 2DArtist magazine. Winners of our challenges have then been asked to show the stages of creation of their winning concepts – different elements and some brief explanation

text – of why, and how, they did what they did. This then gets formatted into the rather fetching pages you'll find here within this article.

We hope you will enjoy the results of the final challenge - one which we quite honestly think has knocked the socks (and bras, in some

cases) off some of our other challenges. We give thanks to everyone who have supported the challenges over the last three years, and to those who have helped this final challenge go out on a high. Thank you, and enjoy!

5th



**Tom van Wanrooy - Tommoy**  
info@thecartoonfactory.nl  
<http://www.thecartoonfactory.nl>

5th



**Tsolmonbayar Batbaatar - GRMC**  
grmcx\_xac@yahoo.com



4th



**Rosa Hughes - rosatron**  
rosatron@gmail.com  
<http://www.rosatron.com/>

3rd



**Marc García - Marcuswelbey**  
two2lions@gmail.com

2nd



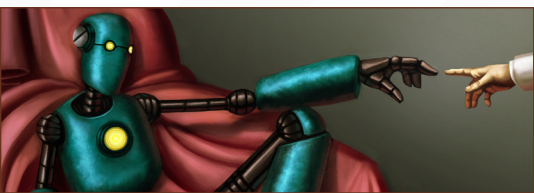
**Jan Pedroietta - jpedro**  
jpedro@jpedro.com  
<http://jpedro.cgsociety.org/gallery/>

1st



**Felipe Fernández Morell - bstsk**  
contactos@ffilustracion.com  
<http://www.ffilustracion.com>





## Making Of's

Here are the 'Making Of' from last month's top 3 winning entries...

## 3rd Artina

Software Used: Photoshop

### Step 01

After some quick sketches that weren't really turning me on, I decided to go with an image paying homage to the Sistine Chapel painting by Michelangelo. I used a custom brush that I created myself which I love to sketch with – it has the feeling of a palette knife that gives me some nice thick and thin lines, and happy accidents tend to occur from it that I can take on and work with further (**Fig.01**). Try this for yourself: Take a round brush, lower the Roundness to 10%, Angle to 90, set the Spacing to 1%, Size Jitter to Pen Pressure, Angle Jitter to Pen Tilt, and set Flow and Opacity Jitter

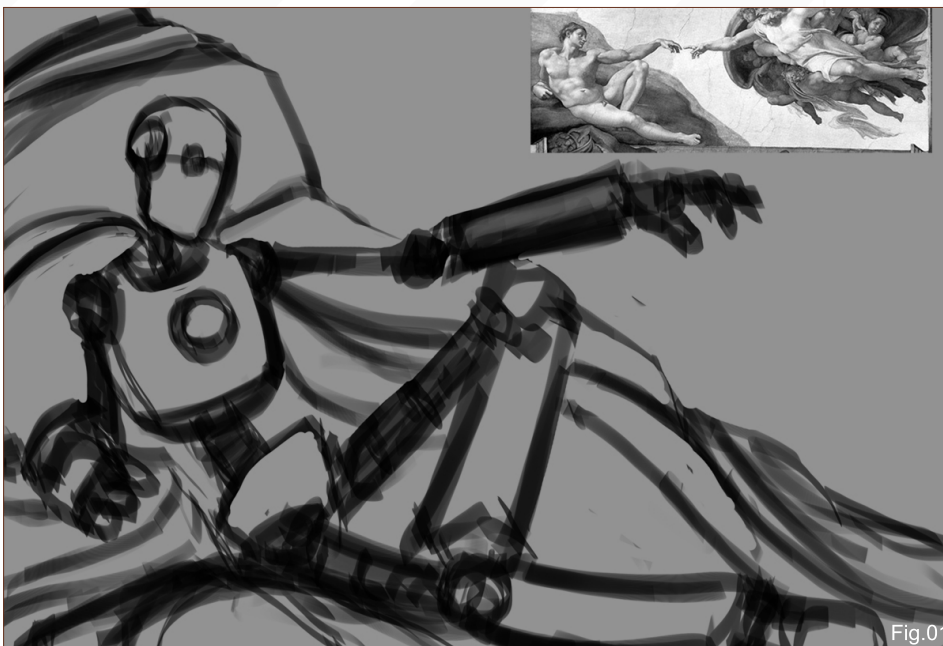


Fig.01

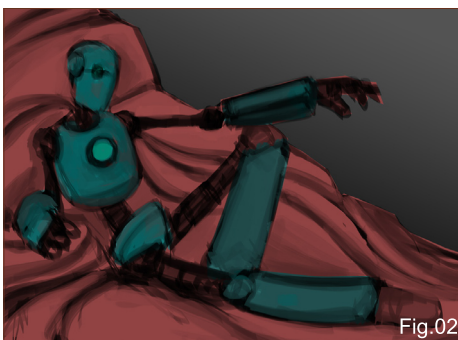


Fig.02

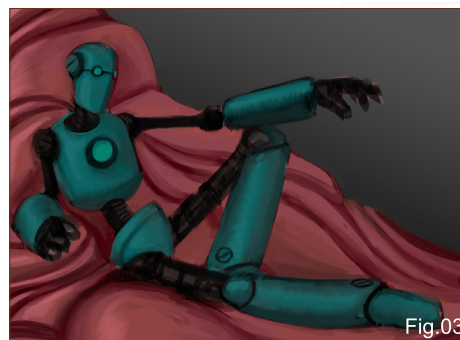


Fig.03

to Pen Pressure. Have some fun with your brushes!

### Step 02

I created a new layer on top of my sketch and set it to Color blending mode. I wanted to use contrasting colors to make the character "pop" from the background. These were basic colors that complemented each other nicely. I created another new layer on top, set to Normal this time, to define the character a bit more using the same color palette (**Fig.02**).

### Step 03

I defined the character and drapery a bit more in this next step. I was still experimenting with the design of the robot; I wanted it to be a simple design that was easily recognizable as a humanoid robot. The pose was very important because it had to hearken to the Sistine Chapel painting, soothe robot's wires and buttons

were kept to a minimum in order to avoid any confusion (**Fig.03**).

### Step 04

I flipped the canvas horizontally at this stage to see if the piece worked any better the other way. I added the yellow to keep the colors basic and high in contrast. I also made some changes to the drapery because I wasn't getting the feeling I was hoping for. I also added some details to the limbs and gave the green metal a textured feel by painting in different angles and smudging (**Fig.04**).

### Step 05

I kept defining the lights and darks, adding more detail and bounced lighting on the character. I added a rusty texture which I found online to give the bluish-green parts some more character, as well as giving a reactor detail to the eyes and chest plate (**Fig.05**).

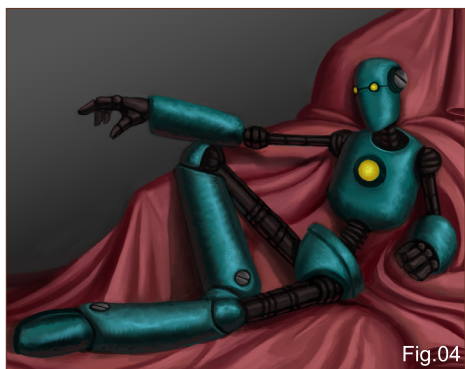


Fig.04

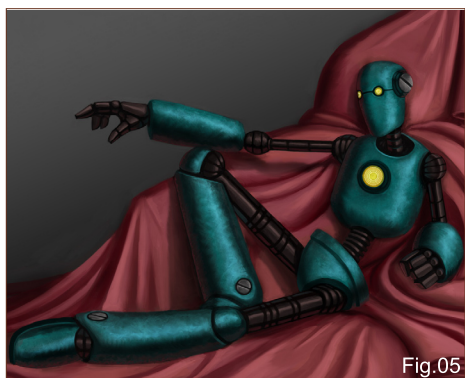


Fig.05



## Step 06

I used the Burn and Dodge tools to punch up the contrast between the lights and darks here, as well as a Levels Adjustment Layer to achieve the same goal. And it was at this stage that I painted in the hand of the scientist meeting that of the robot. Referencing Michelangelo's piece I added some pink bounce lights onto the palm of the man's hand to make it sit a little better in the scene (**Fig.06**).

## Step 07

In the final step I added a new Gradient Layer (magenta to green), set it to Overlay and lowered the Opacity to about 20% or less. I copied the layer, and to enhance the lighting effects I focused an omni light behind the two hands to draw attention to them. I continued refining the details until I was happy, then I

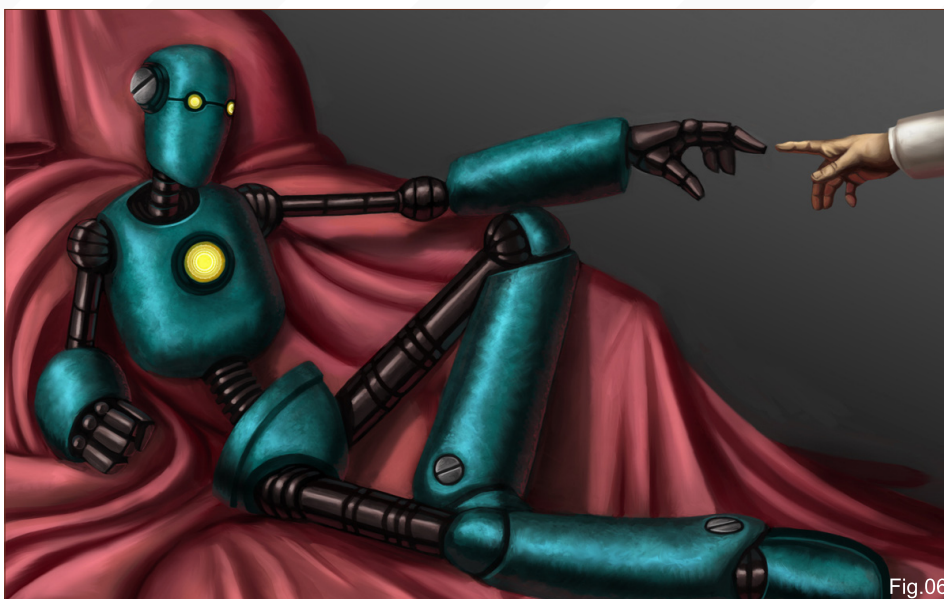
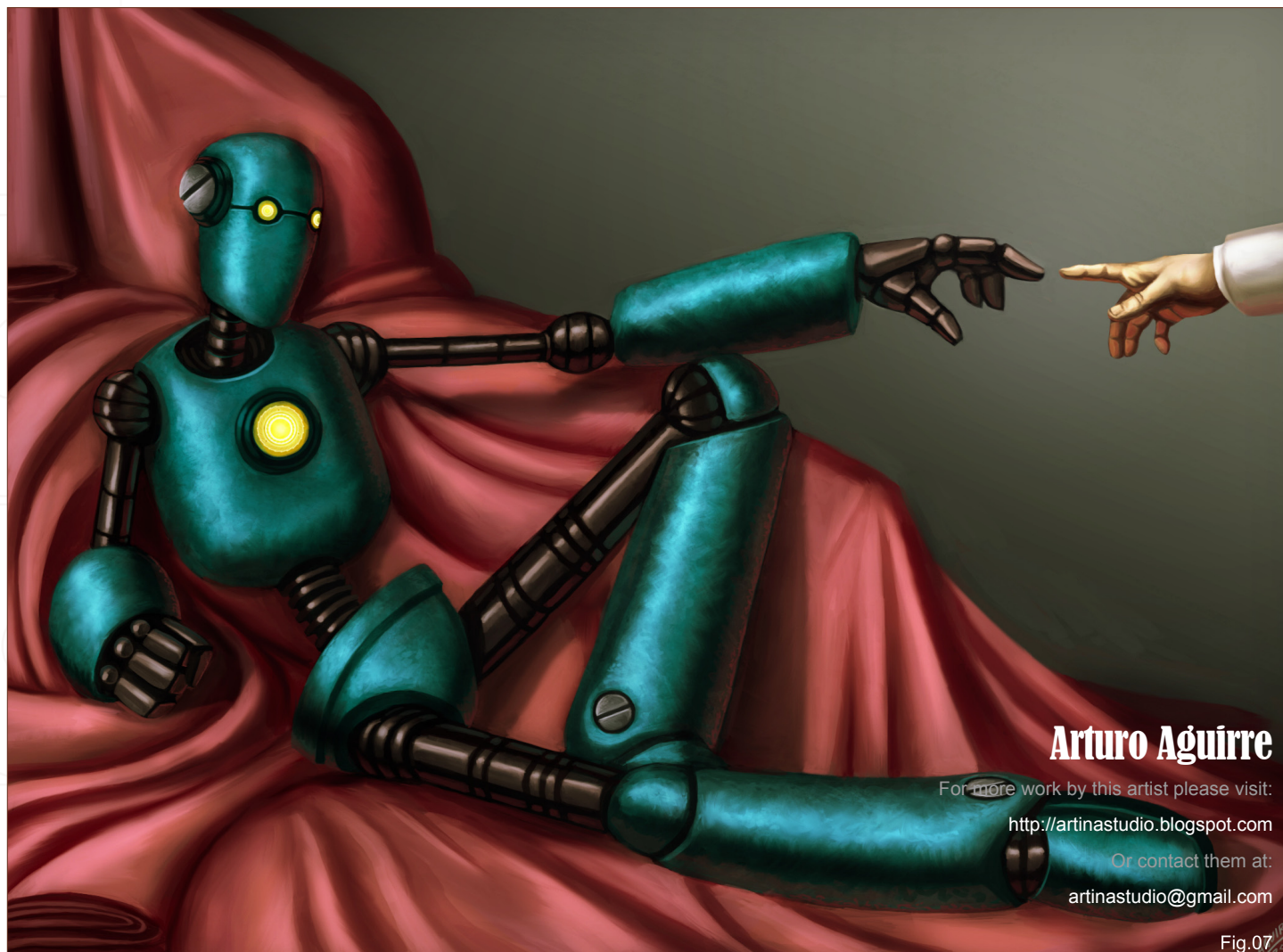


Fig.06

flattened the image, copied the resulting layer and added the High Pass filter to it (Filter > Other > High Pass). I then set the new layer to Soft Light and lowered its opacity, adding

a Levels Adjustment Layer and Layer Mask, erasing those parts that I wanted to act as the lights with a soft brush. And that was it – done (**Fig.07**)!



**Arturo Aguirre**

For more work by this artist please visit:

<http://artinastudio.blogspot.com>

Or contact them at:

[artinastudio@gmail.com](mailto:artinastudio@gmail.com)

Fig.07





## 2nd The Antartican

Software Used: Illustrator, Photoshop

Hello to all who read 2DArtist magazine! This is my first time featuring in the magazine with a 'making of' to explain my process when creating images for the Super Stylized Challenges. I'd just like to say thanks to everyone who voted for me, I really appreciate it!

I wasn't going to enter the Robot challenge originally, as I was away in Australia at the time and I didn't have any of my usual kit to work with. So my initial sketches were pretty much a loose affair that I thought I would do nothing more with. But when my girlfriend, Michelle saw the image of Tiq Taq – 1901, she suggested that I give it my full attention (**Fig.01**).

The idea behind Tiq Taq is that he's a steam-driven robot from the Victorian era, who, in order to survive, has constantly had to upgrade himself to accommodate the various trends that the eras he's lived through have demanded. The narrative is perhaps clearer to me, but I often like to establish a story like this to give me a

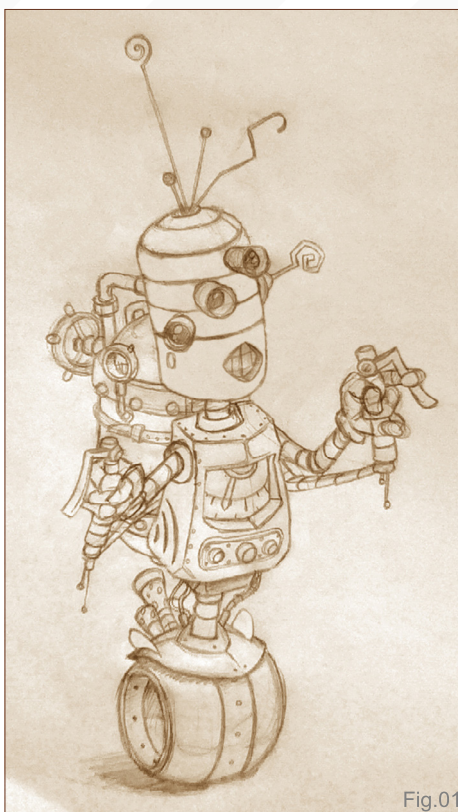


Fig.01

certain focus when I'm drawing. It also allowed me an excuse to indulge in two of my main obsessions: steampunk and *Tron* (remember that film?). Well, I tried to utilize both in the design of Tiq Taq. I gave him the requisite steampunk accessory of a boiler, as well as those highly stylized wheels seen on the Light Cycles in *Tron*.

So with the initial sketch done I began to refine the concept, and on this occasion I re-drew the whole thing on an A3 pad and used the larger format to clear up some visuals on the concept. I added a piano keypad to his belly, a few switches, dials, and the radar on his head. Once happy with the basic look, I took a sheet of tracing paper and drew over the pencil lines with black ink (**Fig.02**). I did this in order to have as clean an image as possible before scanning it.

Because I was without a scanner on this occasion, I took a digital photograph of the line drawing instead, exposing it to as much even lighting as possible. I used my girlfriend's Canon Ixus camera for this, and thankfully it came out reasonably even. I did of course still

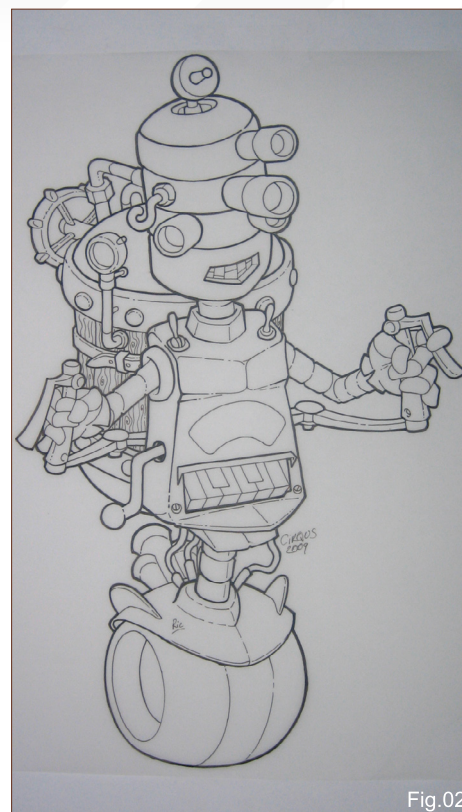


Fig.02

have to tweak it in Photoshop to really clean up the grays: desaturating the image, playing with the brightness and contrast, feathering the edges and filling areas with white, to give me a very definitive black and white digitized image (**Fig.03**).

Now, at this stage I would usually vectorize the image using a redundant piece of software from Adobe called Streamline, which I still have on my antiquated Apple Mac G3. However, as I was in Australia and had no G3 or Streamline to hand, I had to use Illustrator CS3 on my girlfriend's PC instead. I'd never used CS3 before as I still run Illustrator CS on my Mini-Mac (which was in Australia with me). So I had to experiment a little with the Trace feature in Illustrator CS3 before finding a happy compromise between line thickness and accuracy.

Once I settled on a version and saved it as an Illustrator legend file, I transferred it to my Mini-Mac where I could finally begin working on the image with the comfort and familiarity that I'm used to in Illustrator CS. Phew!

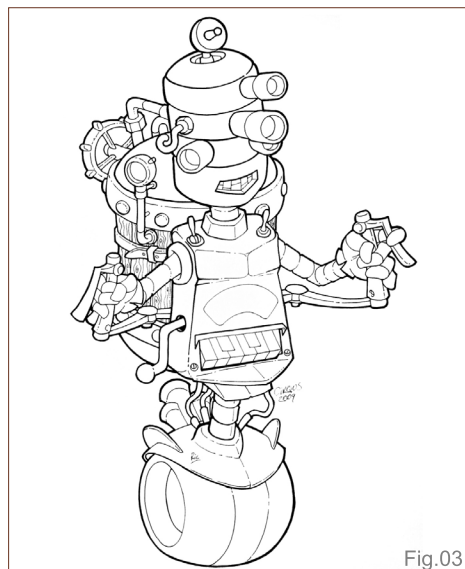


Fig.03



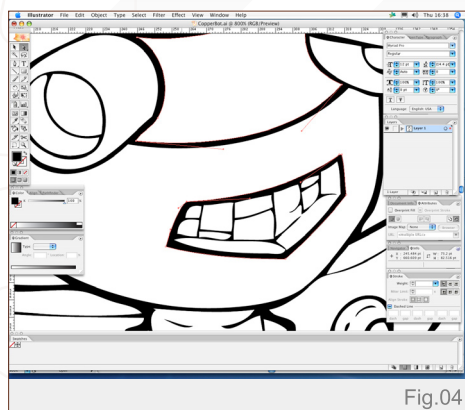


Fig.04

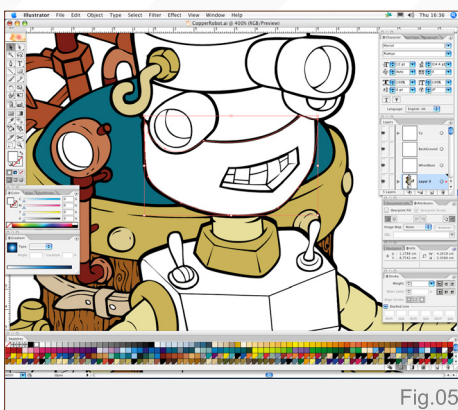


Fig.05

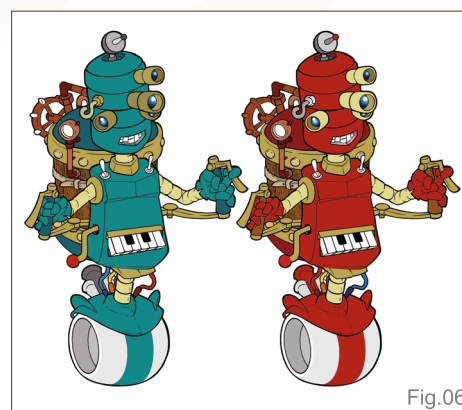


Fig.06

Within Illustrator CS I began by working on tidying up the line work. Now this can be *really* painstaking, and for this particular project – it was! The first step for me, with Illustrator, is to agonize over the image with the Bevel tools (**Fig.04**), refining the lines that the vectorized image translated from the inked scan. Sometimes this works well and a minimal amount of correction is needed, but at other times, like with this piece, there is a great deal of refinement necessary.

Once done refining I continued with the fun part: adding color to the selected areas (**Fig.05**). At this point I wasn't adding details like highlights or shadows, but merely adding color to see what worked. I often duplicated the image, trying alternative color arrangements (**Fig.06**) before settling on a final look.

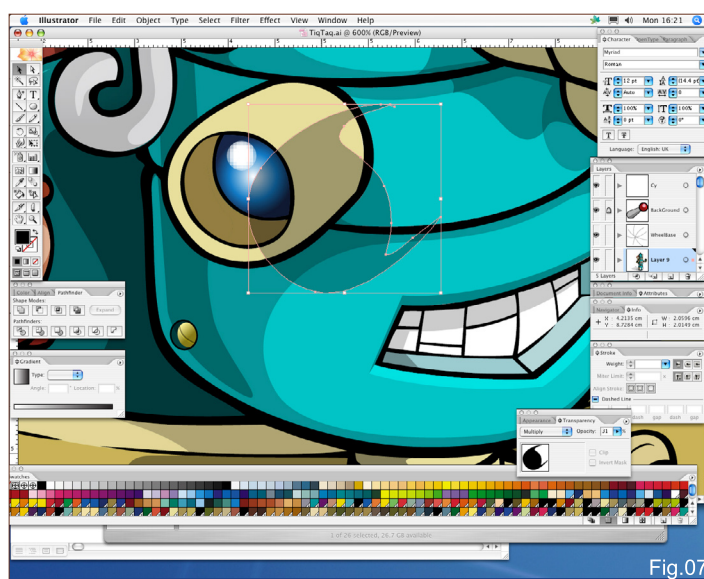


Fig.07

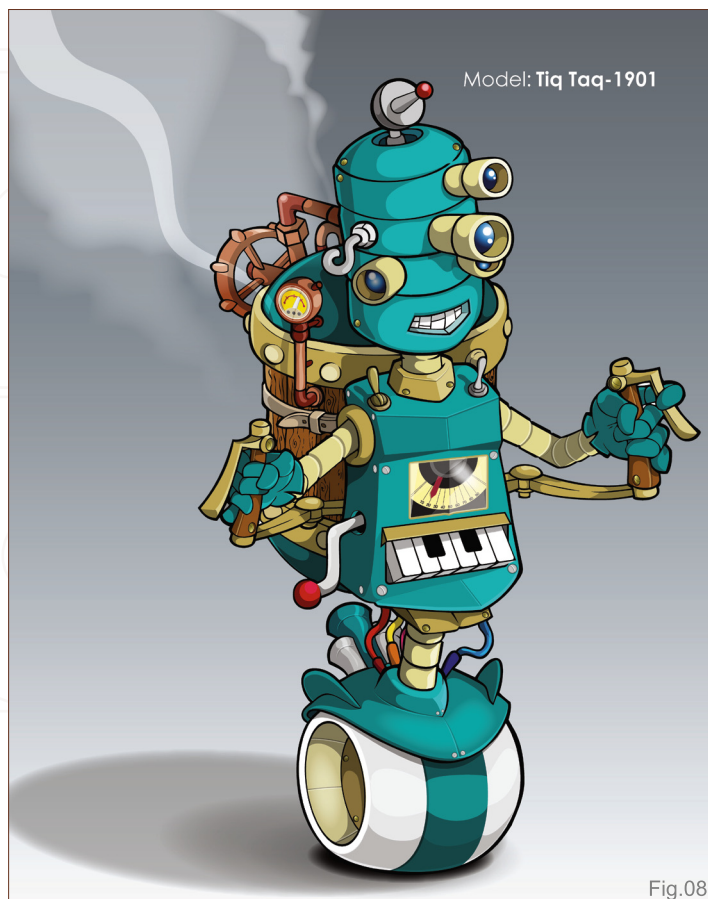


Fig.08

When I was happy with the color I began the process of adding details, in particular shadows and highlights. Sometimes I merely added more black to an established color area, or I would often, with the Pencil tool, draw on top of an area to add shading/highlights – using the Transparency feature I could then Multiply or Overlay that area accordingly, with a chosen percentage for the desired effect (**Fig.07**).

With Tiq Taq, once I was happy with the details, I decided on a subtle background so as not to clash with the very busy colors of the robot. I quickly added some steam effects using the Pencil tool, drawing white cloud shapes and feathering the edges, reducing the opacity for that vaporous look (**Fig.08**).

And that's how Tiq Taq – 1901 originated, rendered almost exclusively in Illustrator. It was fun!

## Richard G.D. Baker

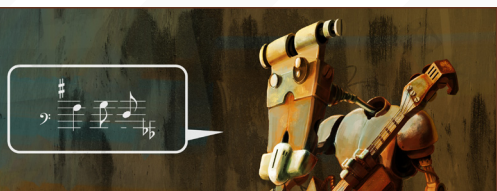
For more work by this artist please visit:

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## 1st 28th Wing

Software Used: ArtRage 2 and CorelDraw

## Inspiration

The robot is one of my favorites themes because there are many interesting details to them, for example pipes, cogs, LEDs and the like, and their textures cover a whole range from shiny to rusty – they can be really varied and visually exciting! For this particular robot themed challenge, my inspiration came from street musicians – buskers. I wanted to create two characters: a small and rounded DJ 'bot, and a lanky guitar playing 'bot. I wanted to place them in a city environment, or at least that was the plan anyway!

## Sketch

First, I made a quick pencil sketch to define the forms (**Fig.01**), discovering the postures and working out the relationship between the two robots. I refined the sketch to provide a clear drawing, trying to use simple forms to build up the robots' bodies (**Fig.02**).

## Values

For this challenge, as you might already know by now is my habit, I used ArtRage 2. So I

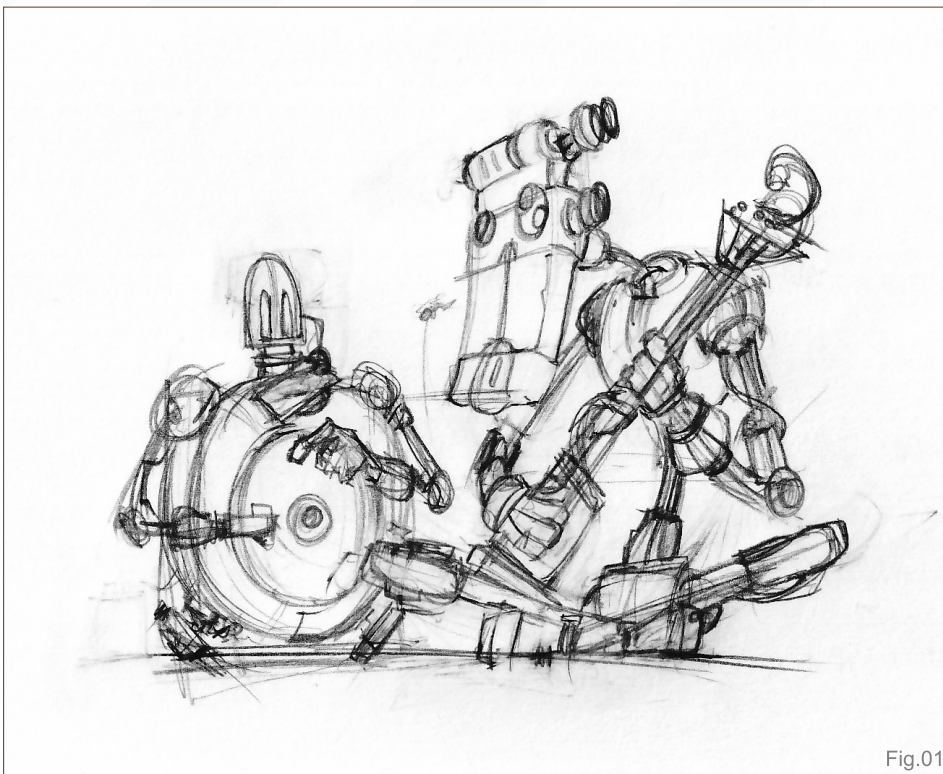


Fig.01

scanned the line drawing to a pencil layer, changed the layer mode to Multiply, and started to block the light values in with large brushstrokes on a new layer. First, I defined a light gray background, and on another layer I started to work on the robots, adding light and dark tones with quick paint strokes (**Fig.03a**).

I wanted an industrial background, a metal bridge or something, with the robots looking sharp on a blurry background (**Fig.03b**). After applying some quick values I started adding detail, refining forms and cleaning edges. At this point, I found that I couldn't finish the picture to

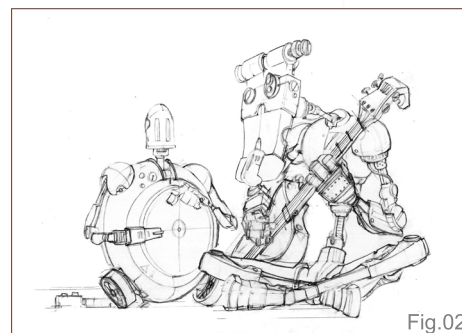


Fig.02

the given deadline. So I had two alternatives: one was to have it remain an unfinished project and try to complete it in the near future; the other was to focus the work on just one of the robots...

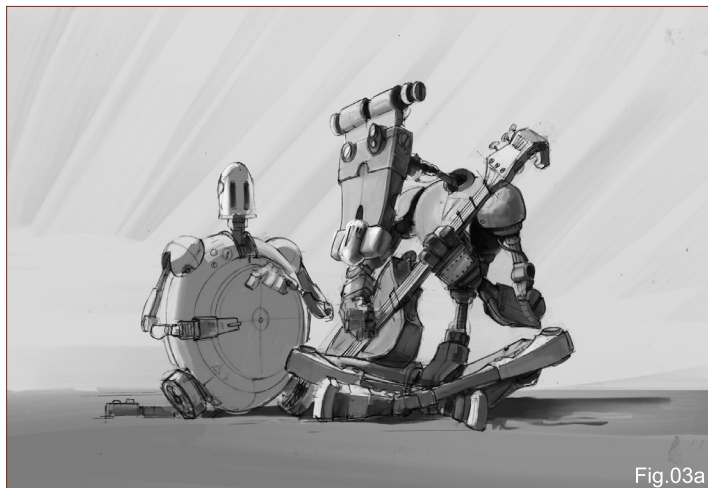


Fig.03a

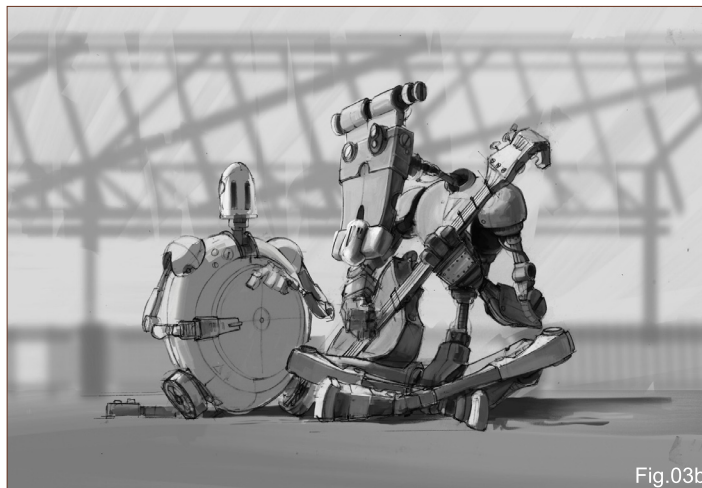


Fig.03b



I chose the latter option and changed the concept, keeping the background design but giving it a darker tone and continuing to work on the guitar robot's details (**Fig.04a-b**).

I used basic paper textures with the Chalk Tool to give rusty effects, and the Pencil Tool to find edges and give fine details (**Fig.05a**). The background was too homogeneous, so I Googled a free texture, used it as a stencil (mask), and painted it over with a darker tone (**Fig.05b**).

## Colors

The coloring part was very quick. I picked a tawny color and made a new layer, switched it to Overlay mode and filled it with large brushstrokes. On another new layer, once again in Overlay mode (above the first color layer), I started working with a reddish-brown color to block in the 'bot. I mixed some lighter blue into the background and gave some blue tints to the robot to reflect the sky and break the monochrome feeling of the picture a little. The finishing touch was the addition of a speech balloon, which I made in CorelDraw using musical notes from a free font set (**Fig.06 – Final**).



Fig.04



Fig.05a



Fig.05b

## Final Thoughts

Much to my regret, I was unable realize my original concept in the end, but I hope I will have the time to finish it one day, and that it won't end up in the waste bin of my many unfinished projects!

## János Kiss

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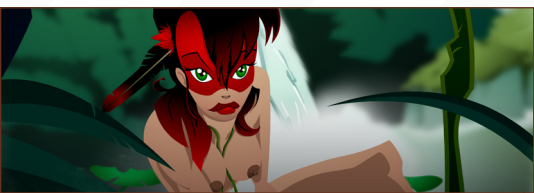






FW 2005  
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## Making Of

Here are the 'Making Of' from this month's top 3 winning entries...

## 3rd Marcuswelbey

Software Used: Flash, Photoshop

For this making of article I will try to explain how I developed a character concept using vectors in Flash, as well as some Photoshop effects.

## Concept and Sketch

One of the things I kept in mind right from the beginning was the time I had for the project, so that I could be sure to stick to it. For this Amazon challenge I didn't have much time once I'd started, so I decided to begin the work in Flash, which allowed me to work with precision in my line work, and later finish off the image with Photoshop for the lighting, shadow and blur effects.

I like drawing girls in all kind of situations, so this contest was a real pleasure for me to participate in because I felt comfortable with the topic. In the initial sketch I tried to find a pose that helped me show the personality of my character, which in this case was a furtive, wild woman. I chose an extremely basic outfit, and gave a punk touch to her hairstyle for a more combat look. With regards to the composition, I tried to focus the attention on the main figure, to make



Fig.01

the character look as much of a protagonist as possible (**Fig.01**).

## Start in Flash

Taking the sketch into Flash, I started by using the line the Pencil tool, the smallest brush, because this step was just intended as a reference to delimit the color zones. Flash allows fast and precise editing of lines.

The painting process is extremely different from Photoshop, since instead of working the drawing globally, I fill the whole drawing with subtle gradients in order to create soft lighting

(**Fig.02**). Flash CS3 has a good tool to work with gradients – comfortable and intuitive. I hardened the shadows using the Paint Bucket Tool with the Paint Selection mode toggled, which allowed me to work on areas without altering the rest, maintaining the brushstrokes' natural feeling. The big difference when working this way is that you can't build up your picture like in a bitmap painting. In vector art, you need to have a clear objective from the beginning, since it doesn't allow for as much trial and error.

For the background I looked for images to use as reference with a certain mystery behind them. I decided on a picture featuring a waterfall, and this element was fitting with what I was searching for at the time. I didn't want to make anything too definite just yet so I drew some silhouettes of plants and trees in the foreground and gave it a dark tone to avoid too much detailing. Since I intended to heavily blur the cascade in the background later in Photoshop, I didn't spend too much time on it, just simply defined the main shapes (**Fig.03**).



Fig.02

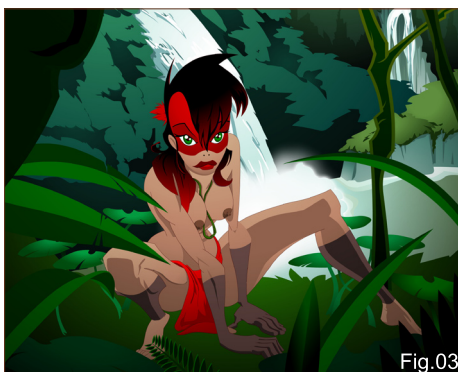


Fig.03



I finished up work in Flash by detailing some of the character's features, and removed the remaining line work that was left over after coloring (Fig.04).

## Finish in Photoshop

I imported all my layers from Flash into Photoshop in PNG format, allowing me to be able to work with them separately and give them different levels of lighting using Hue/Saturation and Brightness/Contrast Adjustment Layers, masking only the desired areas. With the elements separated into layers made the selection process easier, too.

To give some texture to the grass I used a Pattern Overlay layer (Layer > Layer Style > Pattern Overlay) set to Hard Mix with a low opacity. The overlay texture was quite large and I gave it a slight gradient to add a little depth. For the waterfall in the background I made myself a radial Gradient Mask from opaque to

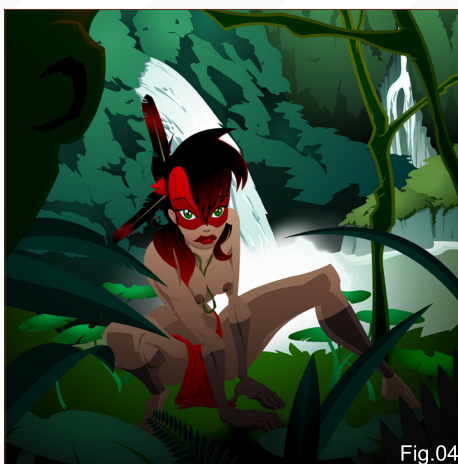


Fig.04

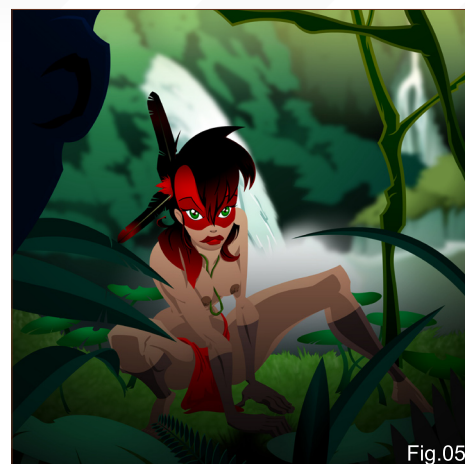


Fig.05

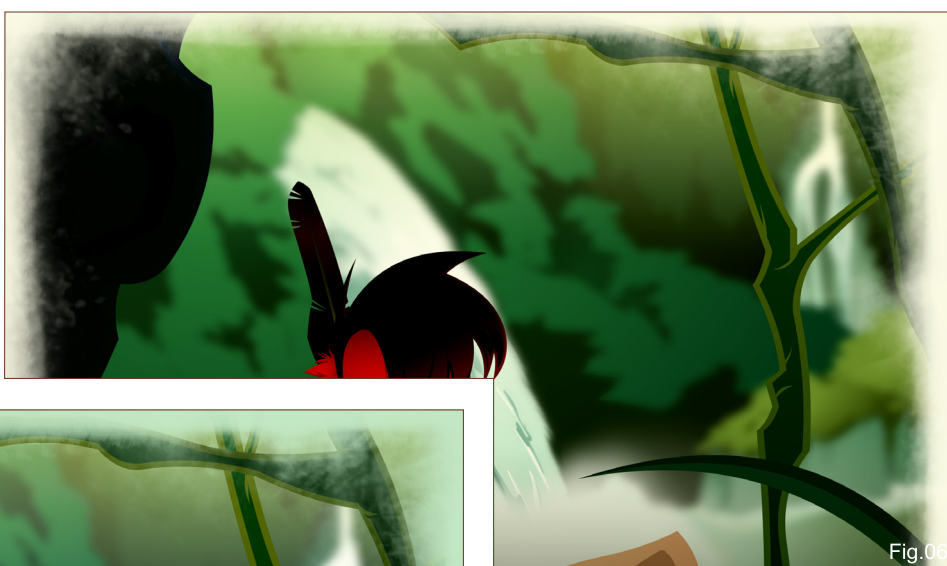


Fig.06

100% alpha, and used a slight Gaussian Blur filter on it. That way I was able to grade the blur intensity from the center to the borders of the gradient (Fig.05).

To create the frame I used the Eraser Tool with different paintbrushes simulating slashes, varying them to avoid showing a pattern in the frame. I tried some tonal changes (Fig.06), and ultimately went for a dark, wet greenish tone (Fig.07).

Thanks and best regards to all!

## Marc Garcia

For more work by this artist please visit:

<http://www.2lions.blogspot.com/>

<http://two2lions.deviantart.com/>

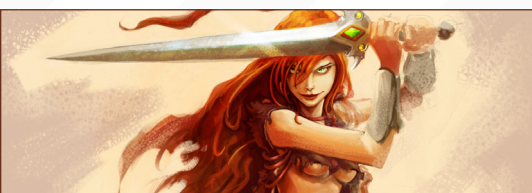
Or contact them at:

[two2lions@gmail.com](mailto:two2lions@gmail.com)



Fig.07





## 2nd jpedro

Software Used: Photoshop

For this stylized Amazon challenge I wanted to try and come up with three different takes, concentrating on proportions and cuteness. I carry a sketchbook with me wherever I go so I can get ideas down when I see something that inspires me, or I'll simply sketch people in a pub – or, as in this case, explore ideas for the stylized challenge!

I usually start a drawing with a rather hard lead pencil (HB) and use softer mechanical pencils in the 2B–4B range for darker values and lines.



Fig.01



Fig.02



Fig.03a



Fig.03b

What I like to do with the harder pencils is to apply only very light pressure and very loosely look for poses that I like. In **Fig.01** and **Fig.02** the very light and scribbled lines around the knees and feet are still visible; in Fig.01 part of the hands and arms are also drawn like that – very lightly. All this light line work gave me a good idea of what the general flow of the poses would be.

If I like how a sketch is going, I will take it forwards with darker, more solid line work, for which the softer pencils are then used. This is comparable to sketching digitally and drawing really rough gestures on a layer, then lowering the opacity of that layer and drawing a cleaner line drawing on a new layer on top of that. It's possible to cover a lot of ground with only a 2B pencil, but I find that using a harder lead and applying only very gentle pressure naturally prevents me from going too dark with my line work too early on.

I generally make sure that I draw not just with my fingers and my wrist resting on the paper

as an anchor point, but I also use my elbow as an anchor, and even draw from the shoulder as well to get some nice flowing lines. I don't spend too much time rendering the sketches – a few lay-ins and areas that are in shadow blocked in are enough, since I color my chosen sketches later in Photoshop.

With the drawings scanned, I left Fig.01 and Fig.02 pretty much untouched and played a little with the third one first of all. I used a very simple round brush in Photoshop for most of the sketching, with Other Dynamics set to Pen Pressure. While I liked the simple sketch (**Fig.03a**), making the silhouette a bit more interesting by introducing the skull helmet with the horns and introducing some basic armor elements gave me another option I liked (**Fig.03b**).

So I had four sketches at this stage, all of which worked with similar design elements but had different emphasis in terms of how they were stylized. Head to body proportions is the most obvious difference; the simplification of, for



example, the facial features and anatomy in general is also quite apparent, especially from Fig.01 to Fig.03a.

Since I really enjoyed the way my Amazon Warrior was holding the sword in Fig.01, giving us that mean look from under her eyebrows, I decided to go ahead and color that one for my challenge entry. I wanted to try a rather loose and painterly approach, so the main brushes I used were the Chalk brushes, and the Pastel on Charcoal Paper, Soft Oil Pastel, and Waxy Crayon brushes from the default Dry Media Brushes set by Photoshop. They all used the same Brush Tip. In Other Dynamics, Opacity Control was set to Pen Pressure; in Shape Dynamics, Control was also set to Pen Pressure, and Minimum Diameter was set to 50%. Angle Jitter Control was set to Initial Direction. I also used a Chalk Brush Tip in the Dual Brush section.

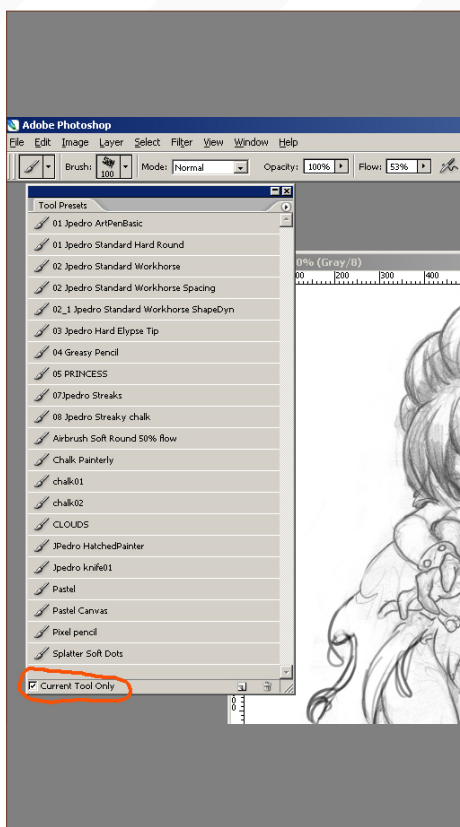


Fig.04

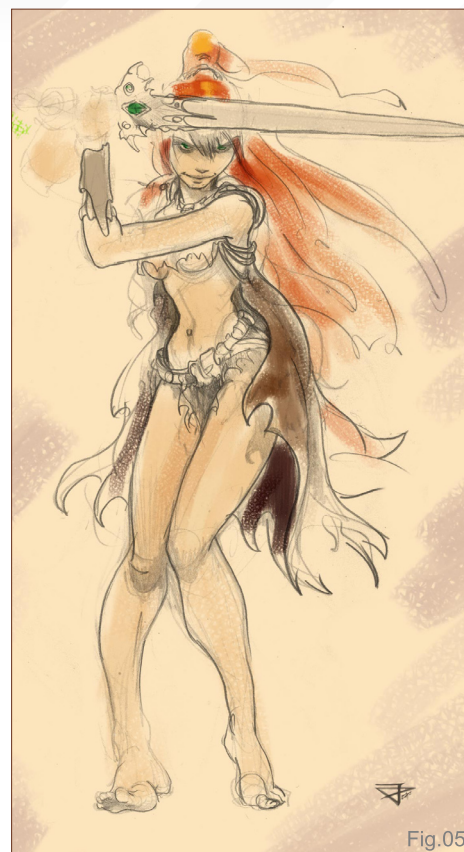


Fig.05



Fig.06

Once a Brush is setup to your liking, you should save that variant of the brush to your brush library. To do that, while in Brush mode, right-click anywhere on the canvas, click the little triangle icon on the top right, and choose New Brush Preset. The Brush you just created should then appear at the bottom of the list. Your list of Brushes can get quite long, and a really great way to access your most commonly used Brushes or other Tools is by saving them as Tool Presets. I've undocked my Tool Presets window and have it open all the time, and I have Current Tool Only ticked (Fig.04). That way, only whatever Tool mode I am currently working in is shown in the list. In this case I am in Brush mode, so all my Brushes I saved as Tool Presets are shown in the list, and I can comfortably select and switch between them. Say, for example, you are in Smudge mode and have found a Brush tip with certain settings that really work well for blending: save it as a Tool Preset – that way you can build up a nice pool of favorite Tools that you can easily access.

I have saved a small selection of my Tool Presets for you to try out if you like (click on the **Free Resources** logo to download with this article). The Chalk Brushes I was talking about can also be found in there. To load them, open your Preset Manager (Edit > Preset Manager > Preset Type: Tools, and open the file).

OK, so for the coloring I went straight for it, laying them in on a Multiply layer on top of my pencil study (Fig.05). Using a combination of Overlay, Multiply and Normal layers on top, I gradually built up the detail in color.



Download your Free  
Tool Presets which  
accompany this  
Making Of



I chose to give her red hair and green eyes, which gave me a nice contrast to work with.

I flipped the canvas a few times to get a fresh view on the drawing, and I changed the pose again slightly so that it felt more like she was walking towards us (**Fig.06**). I emphasized this even more in the final step (**Fig.07**). The visible brush marks from the Chalk brushes around the character and the broken up edges on her coat and hair were what I intended on achieving, so they didn't need any cleaning up. For my finishing touch I did some detailing work in and around the focal area, and then I called this one done!

## Jan Pedroietta

For more work by this artist please visit:

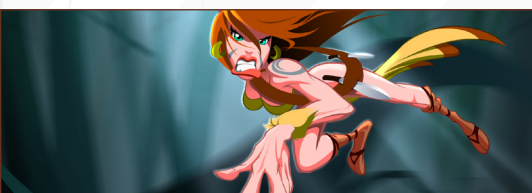
<http://jpedro.cgsociety.org/gallery/>

Or contact them at:

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## 1st bstsk

Software Used: Flash,

We all have one of those pictures where we've thought, "I'm onto something here!" At some point though, things go wrong, and that picture then gets added to a new folder in your "Things to finish someday" section of your hard disk. Well, that was the case with this one: when the theme was given for July's challenge, one of those forgotten images from about four years ago came to mind ... of an Amazon Warrior! The pencil drawing was pretty bad, but it had a certain feeling of motion to it that I liked a lot, so I decided to go for it (**Fig.01**).

I started the picture from scratch. With time having taken my blindfold off, I quickly saw where the pencils had gone wrong before, so I changed the head size and gesture, and tweaked the expression a little. Using my sketch as a background and with a color scheme in mind, I went into Adobe Flash. This might seem like a strange choice for vector based software – Illustrator being much more versatile – but I frequently use Flash for animation and I'm much quicker with it. So I traced the whole image, using a thick colored line for most of the character, which gave it a great cartoon feel. I left some parts without this outline though, where I felt it wasn't needed, like on her hair and her weapon.

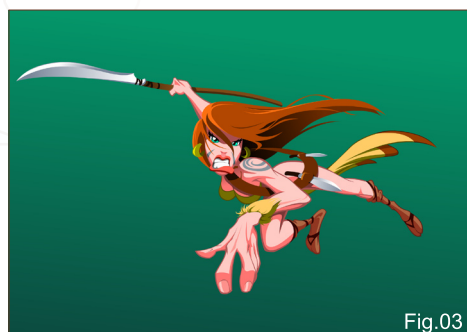


Fig.03

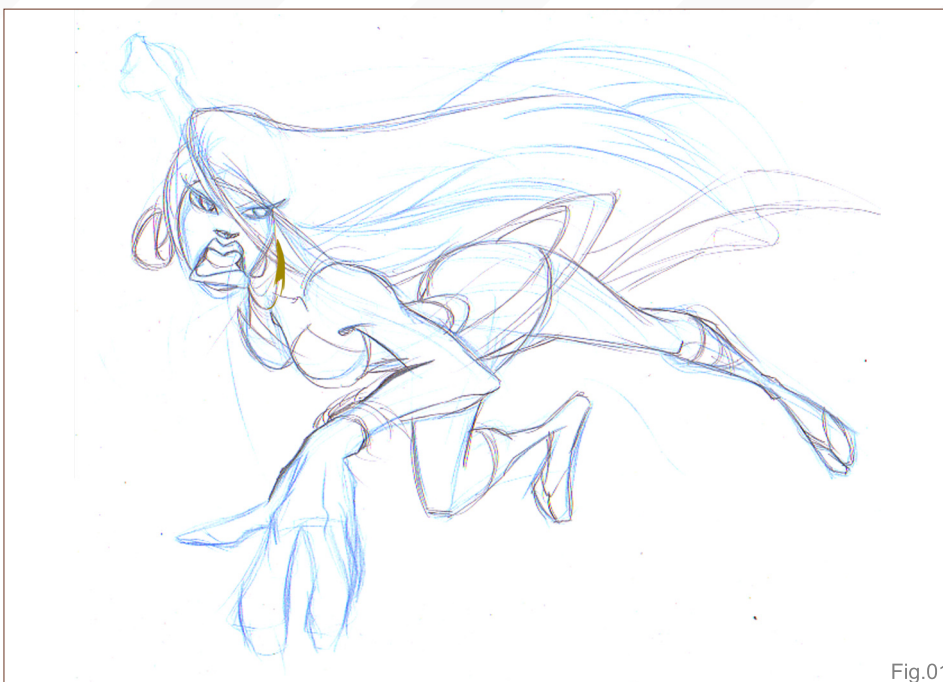


Fig.01



Fig.02

To get a nice ink feel I had to trace both sides of the line; there are software options to do this (not in Flash, though) but I prefer to control the line thickness by tracing – it means more work, but the results are much more to my liking. By controlling line thickness in this way you can give perspective to a completely flat drawing, since line thickness acts as a sort of depth of field (the thicker the line, the more focused the drawing). While I "inked" the drawing, I felt the freedom to change proportions and to search for the right amount of detail – not too much since I intended for an animation feel to it, and not too little because it had to hold its ground as an illustration (**Fig.02**).

I decided not to use vector gradients too much because I wanted to aim for a cartoon look, with flat coloring, so the depth had to come from line thickness, color temperature, perspective and depth of field. To that end I used the background. I hadn't really thought much about it until this point, and since the challenge was all about the character I made one that simply reinforced the character and composition. So I went for the complementary color to the general tone of the character and painted a green gradient (**Fig.03**).

I then placed two different layers of trees with different scales and transparency levels, and



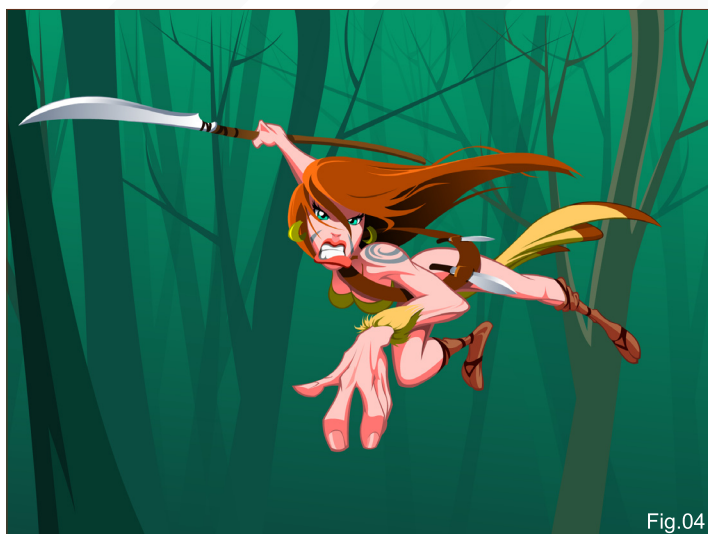


Fig.04

applied different amounts of Gaussian Blur to each one of them (**Fig.04**). With the background established I added a couple of branches in the foreground and a huge branch connecting both planes, to make it a little more crowded and to better suggest the scale of the trees (**Fig.05**).

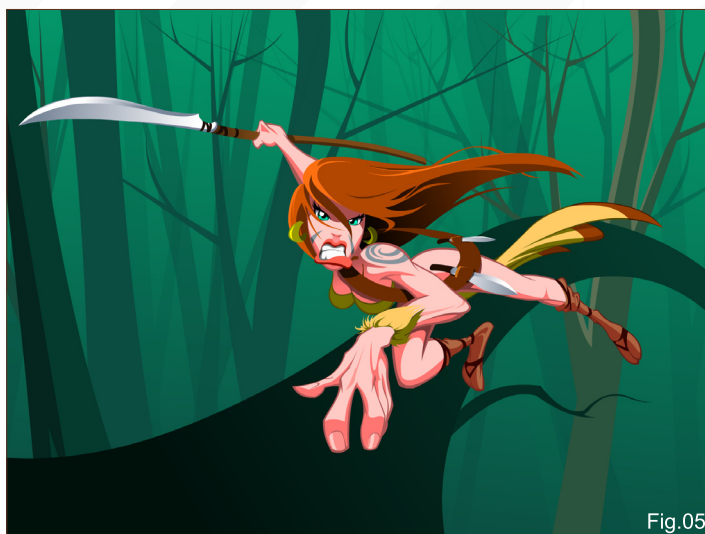


Fig.05

Finally, I painted a heavy border in black and applied a Gaussian Blur to that as well. The effect of this was a gradient darkening towards the image's limits, centering the attention on the character (**Fig.06**).

At this point, I traced a light beam coming up from the trees and set the layer to Overexpose to complete the effect. I blurred it and carefully deleted those parts where the character blocked the light (**Fig.07**). The last step was then changing the tone and saturation values of



Fig.06





Fig.07

the background to end up with a greenish blue (Fig.08). As the finishing touch, I added a slight glow to the Amazon character, and overexposed her hair a little (Fig.09 – Final).

## Felipe Fernández Morell

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Fig.08



Fig.09



“The whole selection process is very fast because of the line rendering layer, so I am able to define my light and shadowed areas in a comfortable way without being slowed down...”

Download your Free Base Image to accompany this tutorial here.



# USING 3D AS A BASE FOR 2D PAINTING

This tutorial series will revolve around the use of 3d as a starting point for digital painting. In particular we will explore the value of Google SketchUp, a free program enabling users to quickly build 3d environments using a set of intuitive tools.

This technique is used by many contemporary artists and is used as a quick and effective way of establishing correct perspective as well as offering a moveable camera in order to experiment with compositions.

As a 3d package SketchUp is easy to learn and does not require hours of training and as an artist wishing to draw complicated scenes, this approach can prove a valuable starting point for producing a template on which to paint over.



# Using 3D as a Base for 2D Painting Part 2:

## Using Google SketchUp as a base for Digital Painting

### Why use SketchUp?

Google SketchUp is a free programme enabling users to quickly and effectively build 3D environments using a number of intuitive tools. Unlike most 3D packages it is very easy to learn and does not require hours of training before decent results are achievable. It is very versatile and with regards to digital painting can prove an invaluable tool in swiftly establishing a correct perspective, as well as offering a moveable camera in order to experiment with alternative viewpoints and compositions.

An object can be made and then duplicated any number of times, so if a structural element is repeated throughout your concept then this package can quickly and accurately create such arrays. It also has a simple-to-use lighting system that enables placement of the sun according to the month and time of day by way of slider bars, thus determining physically correct shadows that can be turned on or off at the click of a button. These functions mean that as an artist wishing to draw detailed or tricky scenes, one can use SketchUp as a valuable starting point to establish a "guide template" on which to paint over.

### Installation

In order to install SketchUp, click on the link below and go to Downloads on the left hand menu. Select the free version which is currently

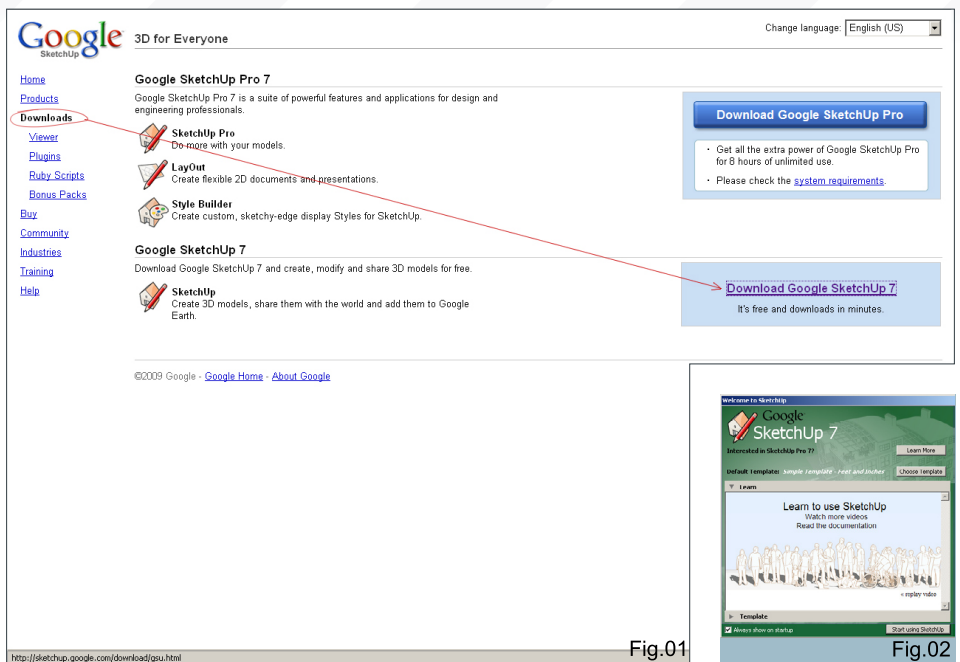


Fig.01



Fig.02

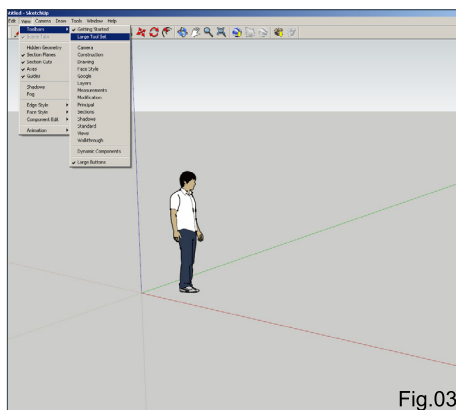


Fig.03

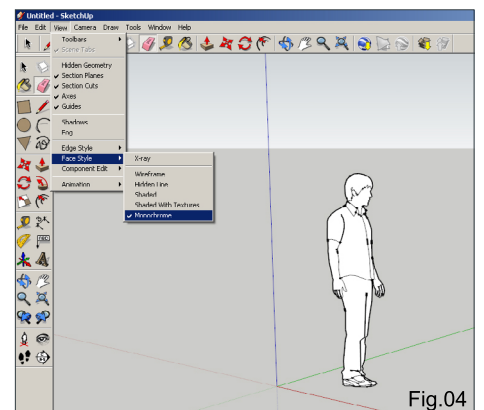


Fig.04

version 7 (Fig.01). Choose your operating system and then follow the instructions.

<http://sketchup.google.com/>

Once installed, click on the application shortcut and you will be prompted with the following dialogue box in which you are asked to choose a template (Fig.02). The scale and type of your scene will determine which you choose, but for the purposes of this tutorial we will select **Architectural Design – Feet and Inches**.

### Toolbars & Menus

When SketchUp starts you will see a screen resembling Fig.03. From the main menu click on View > Toolbars > Large Tool Set; this will access more tools which will appear down the left margin. To change the display mode of the

objects in the scene click on View > Face Style; this will show a number of options, as seen in Fig.04.

If you also check Views under View > Toolbars you will see six small house icons appear below your toolbar (Fig.05). These will provide quick access to orthographic views, as well as isometric. You will notice that I have also checked Face Style in the list (highlighted in green), which has added some cube icons to represent the display modes.

This is basically where you can customise your workspace and add toolsets to speed up your workflow. For additional help go to Window > Instructor; this will open a window providing useful information on whichever tool you have currently selected.

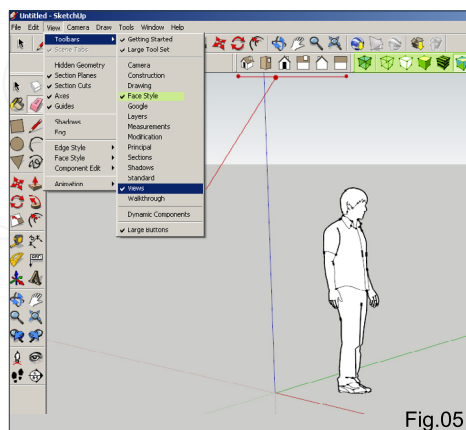


Fig.05





Fig.06

## Basic Navigation

The key orientation tools you will use to navigate in your scene are Orbit, Pan and Zoom, which you will find on the top toolbar and whose shortcut keys are represented by O (Orbit), H (Pan) and Z (zoom). These can be seen in Fig.06.

The main tools used to directly manipulate your objects are Move (M), Rotate (Q) and Scale (S). The Scale tool appears on the left hand toolbar which you will see highlighted if you press S on your keyboard.

## Drawing Shapes

One way of using SketchUp is to create two-dimensional shapes from which you can extrude three-dimensional objects. Select the top view and then the Line tool (Fig.07) and left-click in the viewport to begin drawing. You will notice that as you do so, the points will snap to the

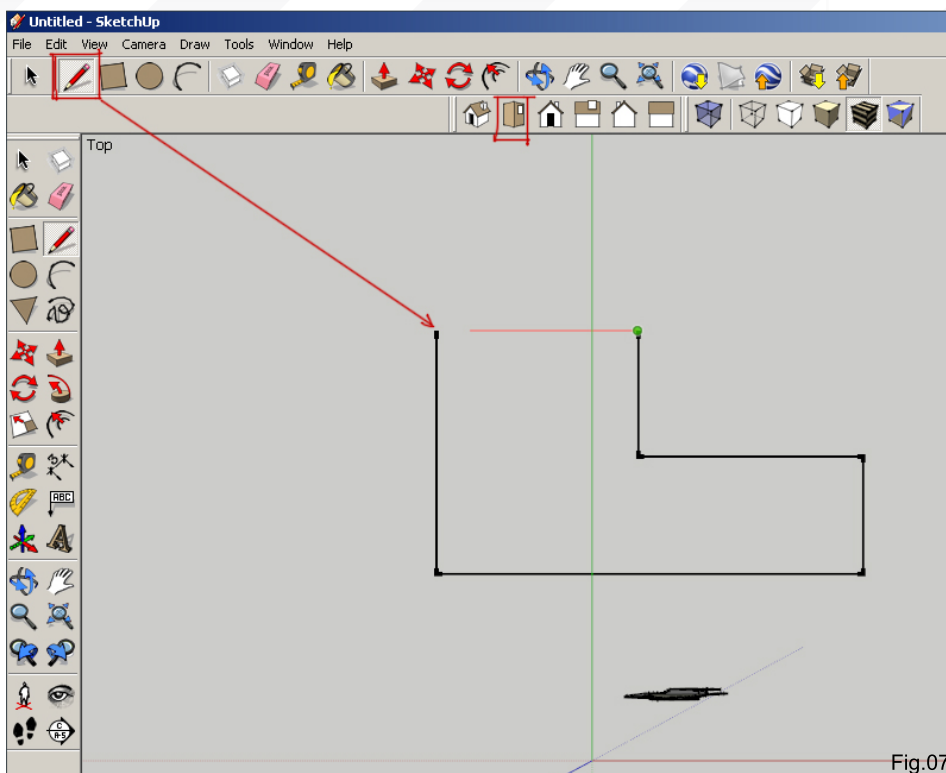


Fig.07

green and red axes, thus easily enabling the creation of right-angled structures.

When you finally close the shape by clicking on the initial point you will notice the shape turns blue, indicating a surface has been made; once a shape has become closed you can still edit

it, however. Using the Line tool, add an internal rectangle (see top diagram in Fig.08). To now make this edge become part of the exterior shape click on the Eraser tool and then on the outside edge shown in red.

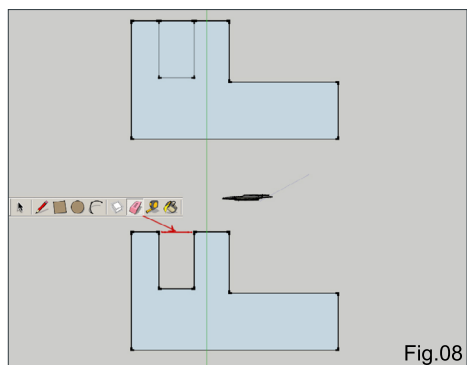


Fig.08

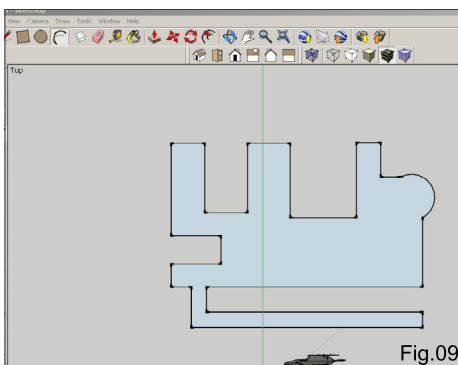


Fig.09

You can continue to cut into your shape or alternatively extend it outwards and then erase the necessary lines by using the Line tool (Fig.09). Here I have added a walkway and also a curved section using the Arc tool. You can also draw more organic shapes using the Freehand tool (Fig.10).

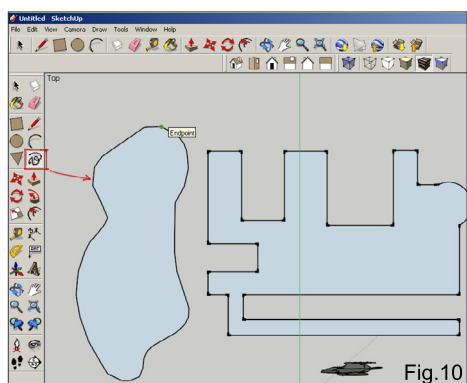


Fig.10

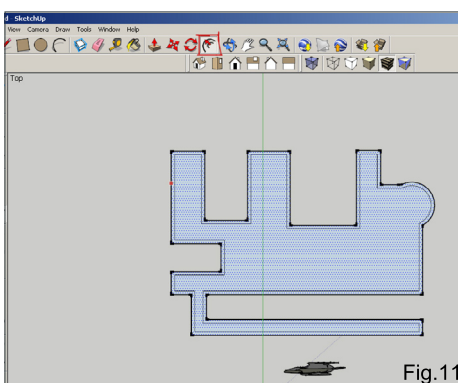


Fig.11

One other useful function, especially for architectural structures, is the Offset tool which is situated next to the Rotate tool. This enables a shape to be duplicated in order to create depth – perfect for drawing walls in a building, for example (Fig.11).

With an exterior wall depth, click on the large internal shape using the Select tool (black arrow on Toolbar) and hit delete. You can then select the Push/Pull tool and then click on the wall and raise it vertically (Fig.12). You will notice I have edited the section where the walkway adjoins



the building using the Line and Eraser tools so that this was not raised along with the outer wall.

## Three Dimensions

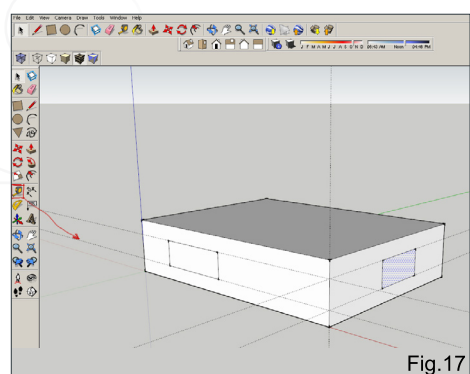
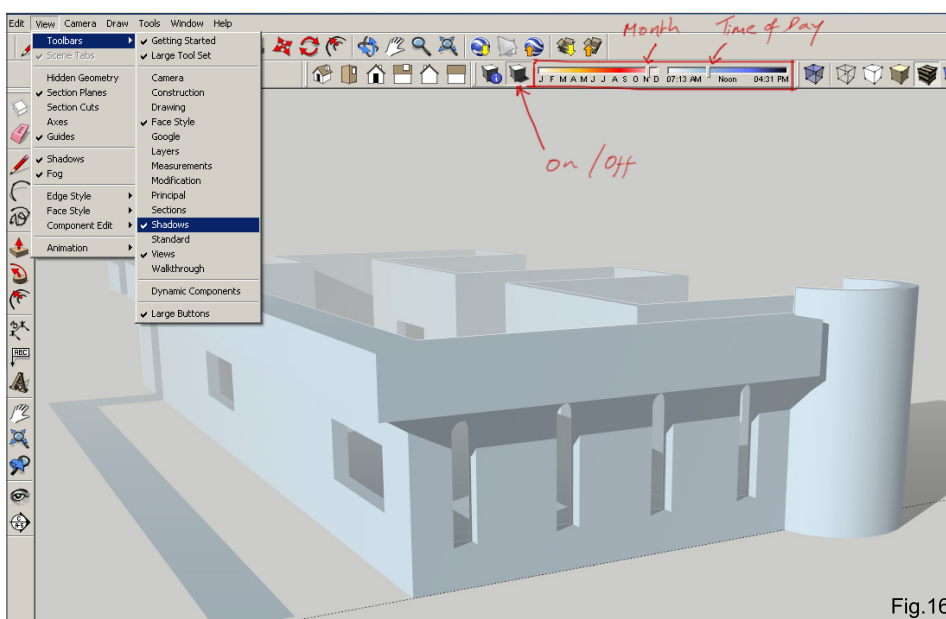
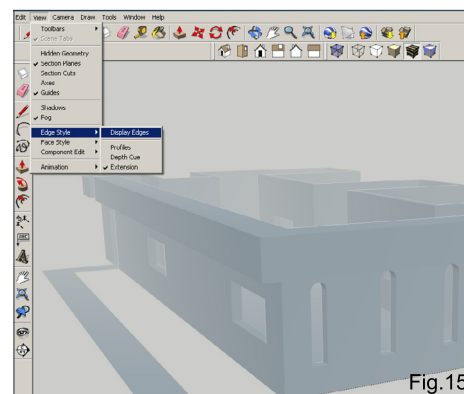
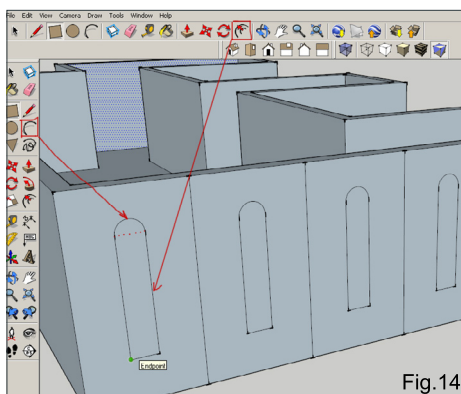
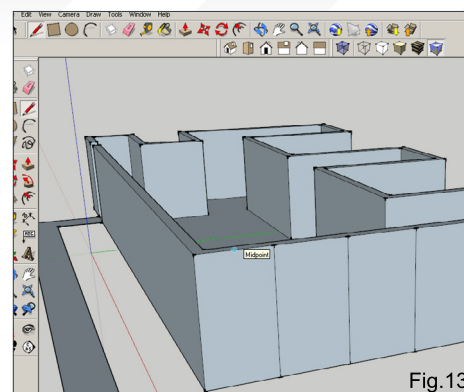
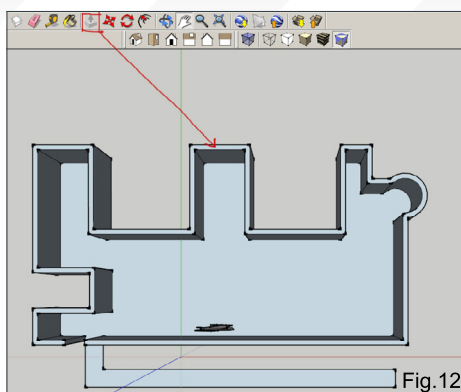
When a shape has been converted into 3D it can be edited further by using a combination of the Line and Push/Pull tools. If you move the Line tool along an edge it will snap to the midpoint between opposing edges (Fig.13). You can then make equally spaced cuts, as shown. These new shapes can be pushed inward or pulled outward, or alternatively a new shape can be drawn and this can then be manipulated.

In Fig.14 I have used the Offset tool to create a window shape in the far left rectangle. To create the same proportioned window in the other sections simply select the Offset tool and double-click in each rectangle. To create the arches use the Arc tool and then erase the horizontal join shown by the dotted line. To create windows use the Push/Pull tool to move the shapes inwards beyond the inner wall surface or until they disappear.

Using a combination of the tools mentioned so far you will have the means through which to create and edit a wide range of forms and design detailed scenes.

## Atmospherics & Lighting

You can add atmospheric perspective in the form of fog to your scene. Go to View and check Fog, as seen in Fig.15. You will notice that the edges on my building have also been switched off, which you can control in the menu under Edge Style > Display Edges.



To add lighting effects check Shadows which is above the Fog label, and to get more control over this function go to View > Toolbars > Shadows. This will place two slider bars on your toolbar which denote the month and time of day. By adjusting these you can control the position of the sun and direction of the shadows (Fig.16). There is a little icon to switch the lighting on or off, and besides this there is also another icon which opens up some extra parameters that

alter the tonal range of the shading. You can also control whether this affects just the object itself or the ground along with it and vice versa.

## Additional Tools

A few other useful tools worth mentioning are the Tape Measure, Protractor and Dimension. The Tape Measure is used to draw guidelines which can then be traced over with the Line tool. In Fig.17 you can see that the tape measure



has created the dotted lines which can be used as a guide to draw the windows an equal distance from the top and bottom of the block. To delete the lines simply use the Eraser tool. The Protractor is used to create accurate angles. Move the tool to the point at which you wish to start the angle and you will see how it snaps to the three axes. Click to establish the correct plane and then click to begin the angle along the appropriate edge. Now you can set the angle using the guideline. In **Fig.18** I have used the near corner as the starting point, which I will mirror on the opposite corner.

Once the guidelines are drawn, trace them using the Line tool, as with the Tape Measure. In **Fig.19** you can see that the two angles have been drawn and then the Push/Pull tool was used to extrude a roof shape across the base block.

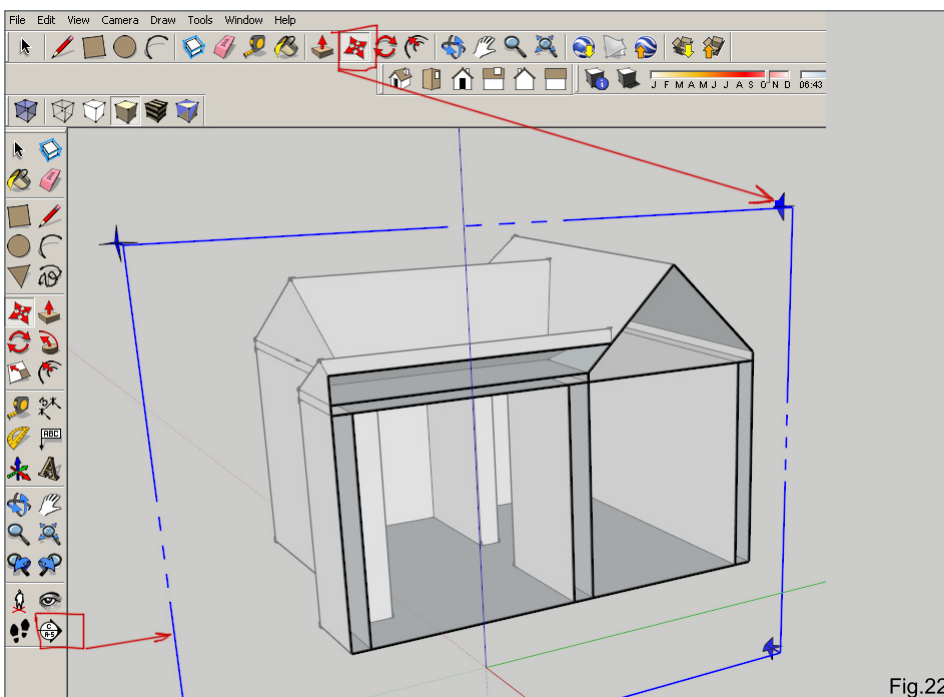
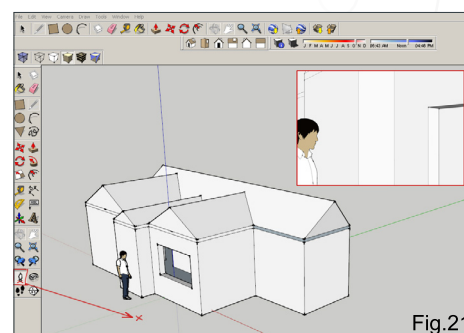
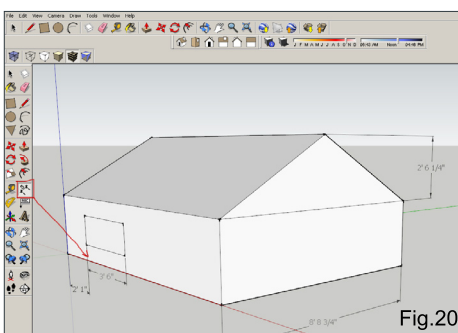
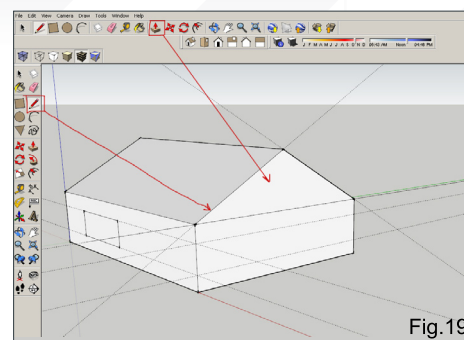
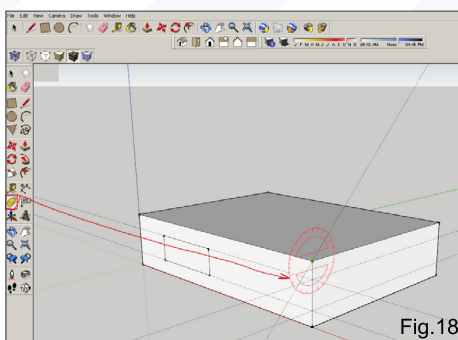
The Dimension tool simply adds a label to your scene, showing the distance between two points. Click and drag from A to B and then drag up or down to set your dimensions, once again using the Eraser tool to delete when necessary (**Fig.20**).

## Cameras

The camera in SketchUp is initially placed at an average eye level height, so for example when you click on the Position Camera tool it will zoom in and appear around head height from the ground. In this sense scale is an important factor in your scene.

In **Fig.21** you can see a cross where I intend to position the camera, after which the viewpoint will resemble the inset image. The character has been placed in the scene to demonstrate the relationship between the scale of a character and the initial camera height. To adjust your camera, use the Look Around tool represented by the eye icon.

One final tool which may prove useful is the Section Plane tool which allows a view of a



cross-section of your object. To use this click on the tool and then align the green icon to the corresponding plane or angle you wish to view. Then select the Move tool and click on one of the corner arrows and drag in the relevant direction (**Fig.22**).

This concludes our overview which I hope has at least introduced the main tools and their functions. There are of course further lessons to learn along with other tools and techniques,

such as applying materials, but the main aim here is to introduce the interface and value of the software in terms of building a simple 3D environment which can then be used in digital painting.

## Richard Tilbury

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Or contact them at:  
[rich@3dtotal.com](mailto:rich@3dtotal.com)





## Using 3D as a base for 2D Painting

**Software Used:** Google SketchUp and Photoshop

In this tutorial I'm going to talk you through the process of creating a rough 3D mesh in Google SketchUp for use as the base of a moody environment painting in Photoshop.

### Step 01

**Fig.01** shows the mesh I am going to use as base for my painting. It's basically just a few rectangular and circular shapes extruded to form a building with one open side. SketchUp is ideal for creating quick base meshes in perfect 3-point perspective. You can even define some camera parameters, like Field of View, to get different types of perspective. In my case, I adjusted the Field of View by going into Zoom mode and typing 40mm into the input field at the lower right. Now the scene looks like it was shot with a 40mm lens!

### Step 02

To prepare the scene for some over-painting in Photoshop, I don't prepare any mask renders like what has been shown in the first part of this tutorial. I rather prefer to do a high resolution line rendering of the scene to have a great tool for quick selections using Photoshop's Magic Wand Tool. To do this, I open the Styles dialogue window from the Windows menu,

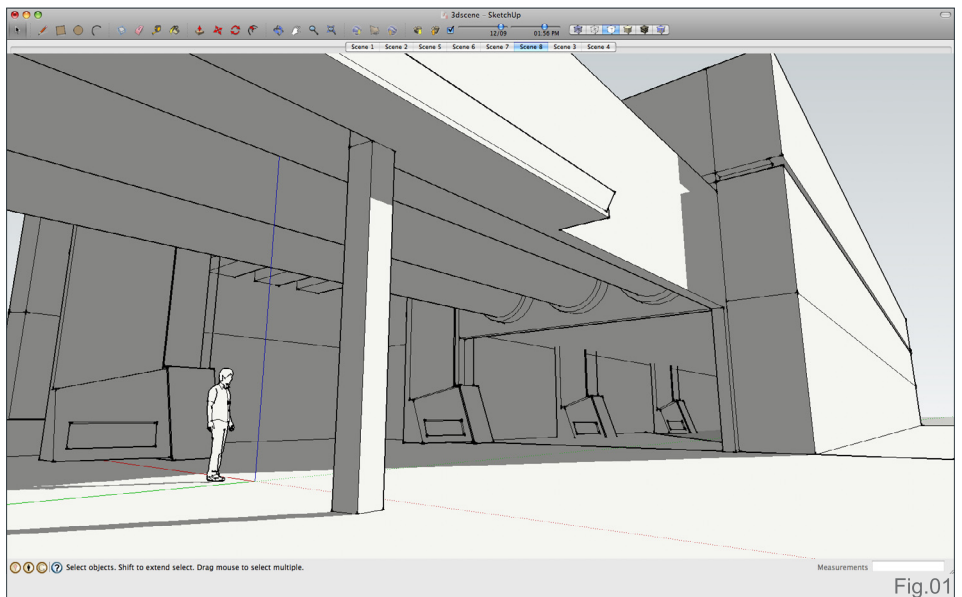


Fig.01

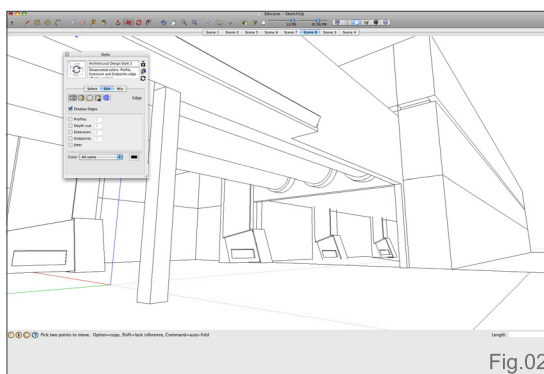


Fig.02



Fig.03

and there I switch off all extras, to get rid of everything else but pure black lines. I also do set the background color to white and switch off sky color (**Fig.02**).

### Step 03

To render the selected view, I choose Export > 2D Graphic from the File menu, and adjust

the settings in the dialogue to high resolution values, like those shown in **Fig.03**. This method generates a clean line rendering of the scene, which I will import into Photoshop now. Because it's black and white I can put it on a new layer and set its mode to Multiply. I'll also lock the layer completely because I don't want to accidentally paint into it later.



## Step 04

Now that everything is prepared we can start with the painting. From here on it's a normal painting process, with one little difference being that I can use the line rendering to select large areas very quickly. To do this I select the locked line rendering layer and use the Magic Wand Tool to select the first areas I want to fill with color. For this image I have a dark, rainy scene in mind, so I fill the background layer with a grayish blue color as a starting point (**Fig.04**).

## Step 05

The next steps are pretty repetitive: I select areas with the Magic Wand Tool and paint in the basic lighting of how I imagine this place to be lit. I start by defining the darkest areas first, and adding brighter areas throughout the process. I tend to paint these values low in contrast. It's much easier to increase contrast later than to reduce it. **Fig.05** shows how the image looks after five minutes of painting.

The whole selection process is very fast because of the line rendering layer, so I am able to define my light and shadowed areas in a comfortable way without being slowed down needing to use the Lasso tool too often. I also separate layers of darkness and light to be able to make adjustments more easily. Of course, you could do it all in one layer, but it doesn't hurt to have layers, and maybe they'll help you later on if you want to repaint parts of your image.

## Step 06

Because I think it is OK as it is at this stage, I am using the Image > Adjustment > Levels to increase the contrast a little before I start to fill the scene with details. Since there are none of

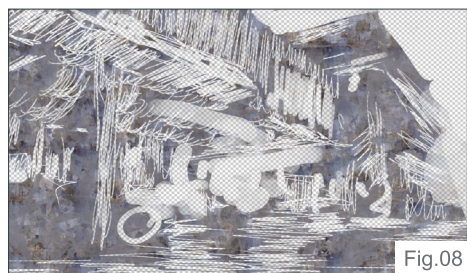


Fig.08

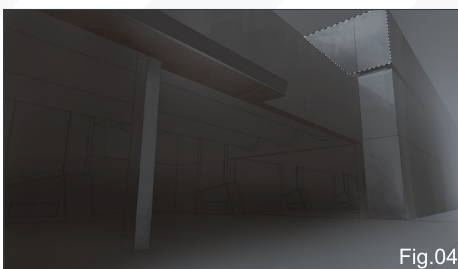


Fig.04



Fig.05



Fig.06

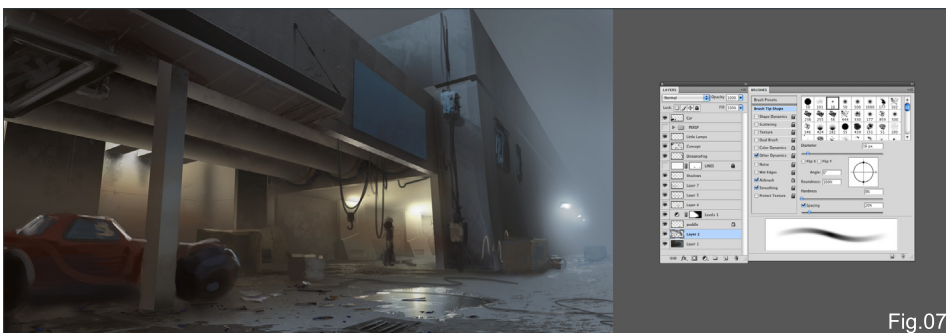


Fig.07

these details in my 3D base geometry, I'll be painting them without the 3D rendered guides, so I'm starting here by drawing some lines onto a separate layer to define a denser perspective grid (based on the original geometry rendering). I can then start painting in details loosely, following the guides just added (**Fig.06**).

## Step 07

While painting the details, I am still refining the lighting of the scene by defining more and more areas with the help of my line rendering as a guide. Until now I've used almost exclusively Photoshop standard brushes. This is because, until now, it has been more important to me to have the right colors and lighting than to use any fancy brushes.

I'm painting in some details on the ground now to give the viewer a better understanding of size and perspective of the scene. And since

light reflections on water always look nice, I've decided to paint in a puddle of water which will also help to draw attention to the bright lights inside the building (**Fig.07**).

## Step 08

Because I think that the whole image could use some more "visual noise" here, I create a new layer on top of all others and fill it with a concrete texture from my texture library. (Texture libraries for 3D programs are a great resource for such textures. Try CGTextures.com for free textures to use in your paintings.) I set the layer mode to Soft Light and adjust the layer's Opacity a bit to blend the texture nicely into the background. But this doesn't quite work without erasing large parts of the texture. Without erasing them, the viewer's eye would easily recognize the overlay as a single texture. After erasing, the texture layer alone looks like what can be seen in **Fig.08**.



## Step 09

I adjust the Levels again here for the whole image to give it stronger highlights and darker shadowed areas because I've decided just now that I want to make the scene darker still. I don't know why but concept artists seem to love dark paintings. Maybe it's because they are easier to paint? By that I mean that you can hide a lot in the dark! To darken the image, I place another layer over my background image and set it to Multiply once again, painting in some darker areas with a dark desaturated blue color. The new dark areas work like a frame for the parts of the image where I want the viewer to focus their attention (**Fig.09**).

## Step 10

It's now time to add some rain – on a separate layer – to push the depressing mood of painting a bit more! For the rain I choose a color slightly brighter than the ground, and an almost white shade for the areas where the lights in the background lighten up the raindrops (**Fig.10**).

## Step 11 – Final

As the final step I decide that some sharpening will help the image in certain areas, so I flatten the whole image, duplicate the resulting layer,



Fig.09



Fig.10

and apply an Unsharp Mask filter with very low values to the new layer (**Fig.11**). Because I don't want the image to be sharpened completely, I take a large Soft Round brush and erase out the parts of the mask where I want the image to be less important.

And with this final step done, I can call the image complete (**Fig.12 – Final**). I hope this process has been helpful, thank you for reading along with this tutorial.

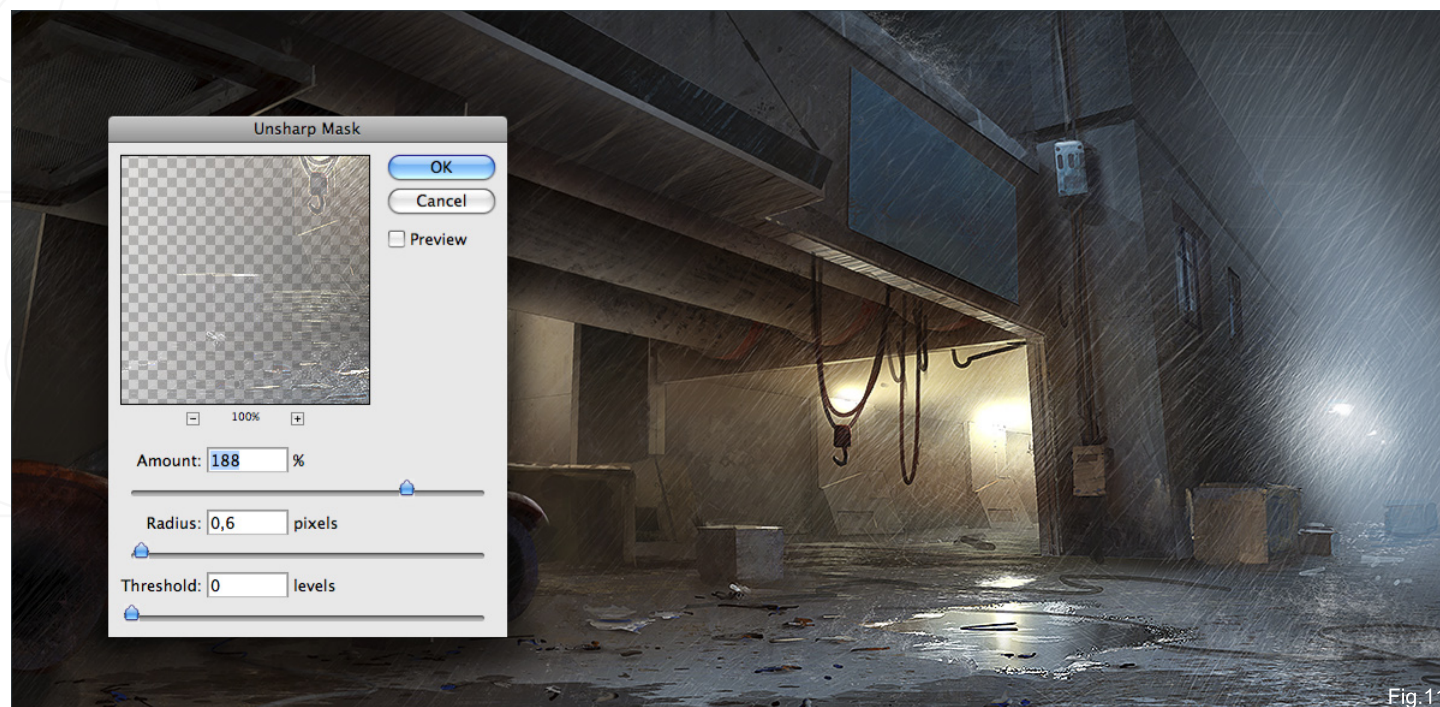


Fig.11





Download your Free Base  
Image to accompany this  
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## Alex Broeckel

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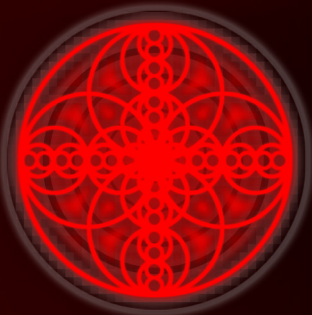


Fig.12



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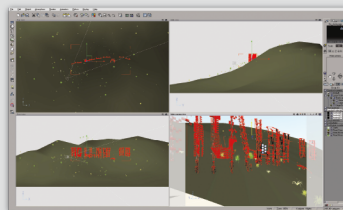
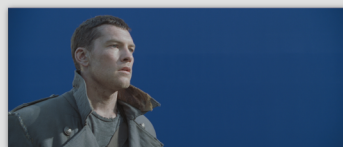
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**“The best way to learn with custom brushes is by playing with the settings. As you can see from this tutorial, making your own brushes in Photoshop is not hard at all.”**

# CUSTOM BRUSHES

An artist's brushes have always been a vital part of any painter's set of tools, and remain the single asset that links paint with canvas. As such, they are crucial to how we view and interpret an artwork, and they afford the artist with a means through which to convey an idea or feeling. This has always been true throughout the history of art, and is no less important within a digital context. Software such as Photoshop and Painter essentially combine and fuse paint, canvas and brushes into a single tool. However, within this complex set of “tools”, brushes retain certain autonomy with their own, distinct set of parameters and presets, offering artists the freedom to affect and vary the way paint is applied. This principle of customizing brushes forms the focus of this set of tutorials, and aims to show how individual artists exploit these techniques to achieve some interesting results!

Download your Free Brushes to accompany this tutorial here.





## Rock/Metal/Stone Textures

Software Used: Photoshop

### Introduction

I have been asked on many occasions by people, how I create these rock textures that very often appear in my illustrations – on walls, backgrounds, even on characters. The secret is a rare passion for painting stones ... as well of course a set of custom brushes for this purpose, which I am going to now share with you all.

We are basically going to be working with two kinds of brushes: a metal chain brush and a rock/stone brush. So let's begin – starting things off with the stone brush.

### Rock/Stone Brush

The first thing we need to do is to find a nice stone picture for our texture library. For this tutorial I'm going to use a free texture from 3DTotal, one of my favorite texture resource sites (Go to [www.3dtotal.com](http://www.3dtotal.com) > Free Stuff > Textures) (Fig.01).

Before we start, you'll need to understand how brushes work. The texture image we are going to be using for our new brush will be desaturated, which means it will have no color at all. White in a brush will represent the transparent color, and black will be a solid one. The different shades of gray will work as levels of opacity. For our first brush we don't need too many shades of gray because the image will be very transparent, and we need a more solid color for our stone.

Open the texture up in a new Photoshop document (I'm working with Photoshop CS3, but this tutorial can be followed in any version of Photoshop). Press Ctrl + U to desaturate the image (remember that the



Fig.03



Fig.01

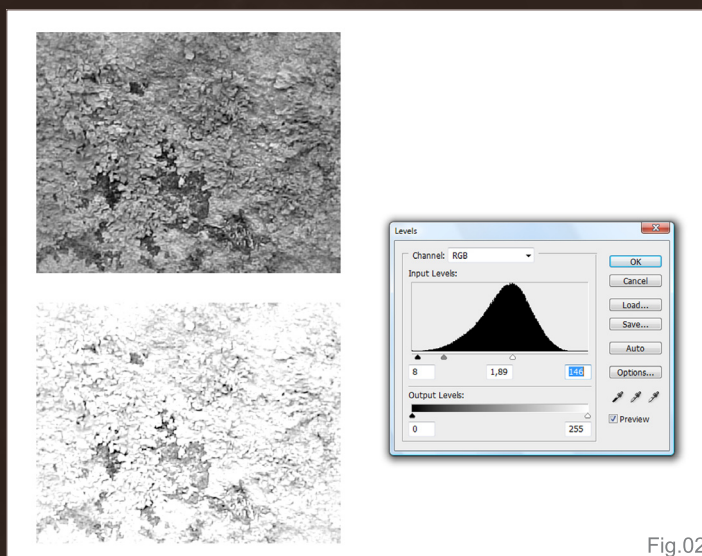


Fig.02

brushes work in black and white so you don't need color), and tweak the Levels adjustment (go to Image > Adjustments > Levels) until almost all of the gray tones have been eliminated (Fig.02).

We now have a nice black and white texture with the correct levels for our new brush, so the next step is for us to decide on how our brush is going to look. Select the Eraser Tool, and with a soft paintbrush erase anything that you don't want to be part of the brush, trying to create an irregular shape. To improve our texture we are going to deform it using the Warp function (go to Edit > Transform > Warp). Try to match the shape of that shown in Fig.03.



Another way of doing this is using the Liquify Tool. Some people prefer this way because it is more visual and you have more settings to tweak, but I always use the Warp tool – it's simple and quick.

The texture is now ready to become a brush. Go to Edit > Define Brush Preset, give the brush a name, and then hit OK. And voilà! Our brush has now been created. You will find your brush available in the brush menu (you can right-click on the canvas for a shortcut to it).

With the easiest part done, we now need to modify the settings to improve our new brush. So click on the Brushes tab on the top-right of the workspace, and in the Brush Presets select Brush Tip Shape. In the window that appears on the right of the Brushes tab, we are going to modify the Spacing percentage to 16, leave the Angle at zero, and let the Roundness remain at 100% (**Fig.04**). If we test our new brush we will see that it still needs some more work in the Brush Preset settings – the stroke looks strange and is much too repetitive.

The next preset we want to explore is Shape Dynamics (**Fig.05**), so select it and you'll then be able to set the Angle Jitter Control to Direction, meaning the shape of our brush will now follow our graphics tablet or mouse direction. Getting around the Direction control is one of the most important aspects of this custom brush technique, as we will be able to see later on when we create our metal chain brush.

Moving onto the Scattering options now, we're going to set Scatter to 85%, and we'll leave the Count at just one. With this preset the brush will repeat itself and overlay the strokes, as we can see in **Fig.06**.

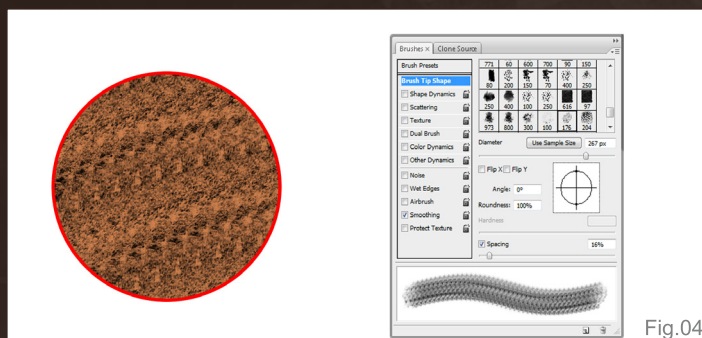
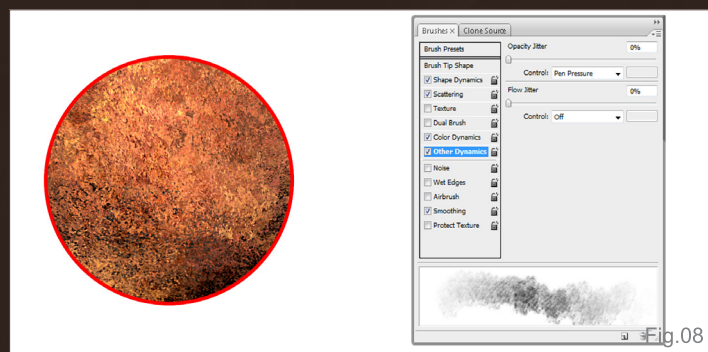
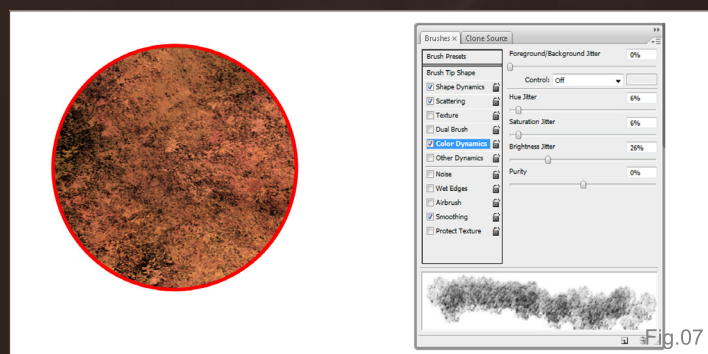


Fig.04

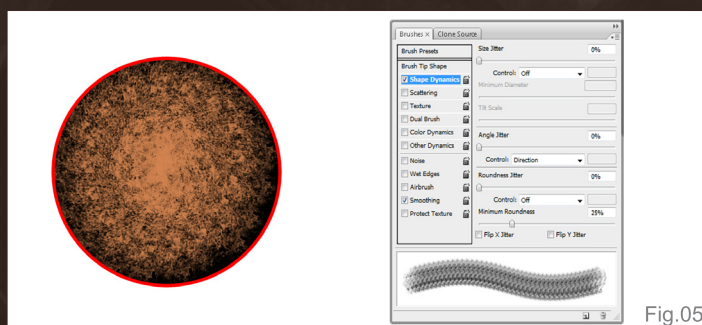


Fig.05

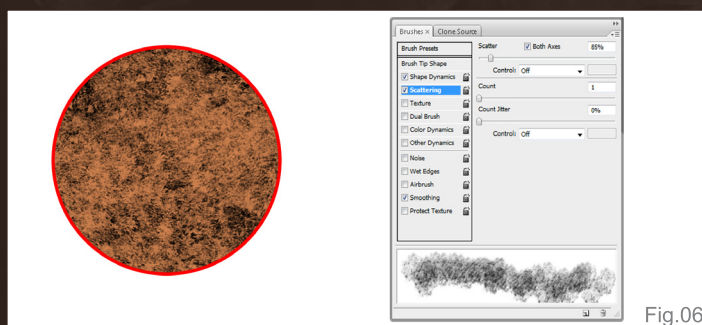


Fig.06

Now for the fun part! Let's select Color Dynamics now; you'll need to apply the same settings as you can see in **Fig.07**. I'm going to stop here for a moment to explain this preset.

If we compare the previous image (Fig.06) with Fig.07, we can see that the stroke is monochromatic – just with one color and lifeless. As we know from experience, rocks and stones have different color values, light variations and characteristics that make each one unique. Some stones have green from moss growth, or violet from weathering by the elements. Well, with these presets, you can play with the color, brightness and saturation of your brush. In **Fig.07** you can appreciate the different color values and light variations with just a few simple changes on the controls. So at this step I'm going to recommend that you find the value you like the most for your own brush – as you can see it's easy and the possibilities are enormous!

Last but not least, we have the Other Dynamics preset to play with (**Fig.08**). Let's change the control of the Opacity Jitter to Pen Pressure; however, if you're working with a mouse and not a graphics tablet you won't be able to utilize this option.



Right-click on your canvas now and select New Brush Preset so that we don't lose any of the changes we've just made to our new brush. And that's it! – Done! Easy and simple! Here is how our new brush looks (**Fig.09**). If we test it out we'll discover that it has pressure opacity, pen direction and refined color variation – perfect for painting rock and stone textures!

Our rock/stone brush is now complete, but there is still the matter of metal to cover, so let's now get started on creating our very own metal chain brush.

## Metal Chain Brush

The first step is the same as before: find a texture of a metal chain. The difference this time is that we need to make it tileable. To do this, choose the Rectangular Marquee Tool and select from the centre point of two links in the chain, as shown in **Fig.10**.

Copy and paste this into a bigger document. By pressing Ctrl + J you can duplicate the layer; you'll then need to flip it by going to Edit > Transform > Flip Horizontal. See if the chain links are looking correct at this point, and check if they are tileable (**Fig.11**).

When you are happy with your new tileable chain texture, follow the first steps of this tutorial once again as you go through the Brush Presets, finding the right settings for your new brush. Remember to set the Direction Control of the Angle Jitter preset, and focus on the Spacing percentage. For this chain brush I have gone with a high percentage of Spacing because I need to tweak the space between every link in my

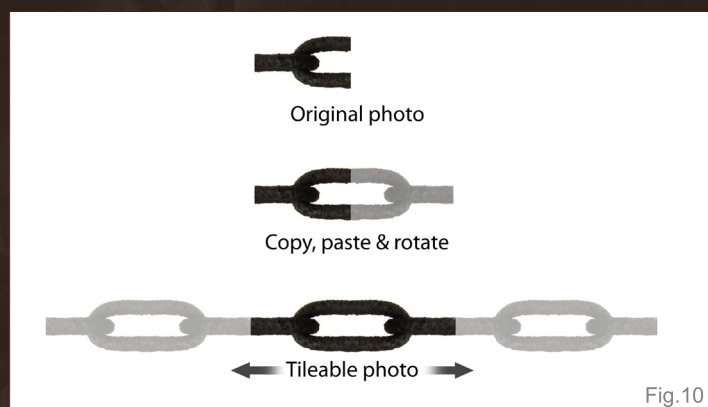


Fig.10



Fig.11



Fig.09

chain; if you use a low value your links will be too far apart from one another. On the other hand, if you use too high a value then you may finish up with a weird shape overall and no links at all! So play around and see what you can come up with, remembering to save the Brush Presets each time you find a brush that works for you – you can save as many variations of one brush as you like, the limitations are endless!

## Conclusion

The best way to learn with custom brushes is by playing with the settings. As you can see from this tutorial, making your own brushes in Photoshop is not hard at all. I would like you to take this tutorial as a starting point of the future of your custom brush collection. Enjoy using them in your illustrations – hopefully you can have as much fun with them as I have had creating this tutorial for you.

**Note from the Editor:** Carlos Cabrera, as part of this tutorial creation, has created not just two new brushes, but 13 fantastic new rock, stone and metal custom brushes that are downloadable only with this tutorial – simply click on the Free Brushes icon and get them loaded into your Photoshop to start painting today!

Download and save the ABR file, open up Photoshop, select the Brush Tool, click on the little down-pointing arrow next to Brush in the top menu bar to open up the brush menu, followed by the small arrow in a circle on the top right of the brush menu – select Load Brushes, then go back to your brushes menu and you should see the 13 brushes sitting there just waiting for you to begin your new painting experiments. Enjoy!



# Carlos Cabrera

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# DYNAMIC CHARACTERS



## ENHANCING YOUR CHARACTER CONCEPTS

This series of tutorials aims to show some of the methods and processes used to design and develop characters from initial thumbnail sketches through to a final concept. The series will be divided into five parts and will focus on the general design methods commonly used by character artists. It will begin with quick sketching techniques used to suggest ideas and develop a theme before moving onto creating variations once a subject is established. The third instalment will culminate in a finished concept design, after which we will move onto the importance of posing your character and the impact this has on their personality. The series will conclude with a chapter dedicated to choosing suitable eye levels and camera views to best convey an emotional state or emphasise a storyline.

CHAPTER 1 | Thumbs & Silhouettes

CHAPTER 2 | **Visual Brainstorming – Variations on a Theme**

This chapter will resume where the previous one left off and will build upon a decided theme and character type. It will essentially comprise of creating variations centred on a specific design. Aspects such as proportion, clothing, props and facial characteristics are but a few of the topics covered.

CHAPTER 3 | Speed Painting & Concept Design

CHAPTER 4 | Dynamic & Exaggerated Poses

CHAPTER 5 | Camera Placement, Framing, Fore-shortening & Distortion





## Part 2: Visual Brainstorming – Variations on a Theme

Software Used: Photoshop

### Introduction

When the folks at 3DTotal contacted me to write an article on visual brainstorming for character design, I thought: What a great opportunity to show something different! Artists often spend hours, days, weeks, even months working on an illustration secluded from the world, at home or in the designated studio space. We may show our work in progress to family, friends, and sometimes we'll show our roughs to other fellow artists for feedback, to make sure we're on the right track, but no one else gets to see you making it. And when the illustration is done, we then proudly show it off, email it to friends, post the finished piece on the web, in popular online communities, let it out so the world can see via this amazing tool that connects all artists throughout the globe: the World Wide Web.

Sometimes we do get to see the process if the artist keeps files of all the work in progress until completion or even records a video of the making of it. Time-lapse videos are always cool to watch, and very informative too. But what about a recording of what went through the



Fig.01

artist's mind? What went through his/her head before he/she sat down to create that piece of artwork? We don't see that often. We can look at someone's sketchbook, but more often than not sketchbook drawings are already intended for show, or to be posted in blogs – even sold at conventions. There's still a disconnection there: a big gap from thinking about an art piece and creating it.

Visual brainstorming is the only way to truly take a peek inside an artist's brain. And it's the language visual artists use to bridge this gap between thought and execution. Every artist does it, in one way or another. If you're an artist or an aspiring one, you may not have noticed

but you do it already; when you do thumbnails on a napkin that no one but you can make up what it is, when you write notes next to these doodles (a handwriting sometimes only you can read), or when you simply research images online, saving some for reference. These studies are not for show or meant to be hung in galleries; they're for you and for you alone. You're not presenting anything to anyone, you're simply trying to funnel all the billions of ideas that are going through your brain, trying to make sense of it all, figure things out, or at least warm up for the task before you get to do it for real.

### Inspiration

For this specific tutorial I was asked to come up with a design for a warrior. Any kind of warrior! It seemed vague at first, but it just so happened I was moving from Chicago to Los Angeles at the time, embarking on an adventurous road trip driving across the United States (with girlfriend and cat!). We took our time and spent seven days driving by some quite amazing places. At the national parks we were mesmerized by beautiful sightseeing, and witnessed vast landscapes now inhabited by men. We would often see mountains with rocks shaped in peculiar ways, caused by erosion and severe weather/climate changes. Experiencing all that helped shape the idea behind the warrior, and what the warrior was about (Fig.01 – 02).



Fig.02



I remember thinking to myself: In the past, people must've lived here, enduring these harsh conditions. Any man living in places like these has to be considered a warrior, a survivor. By then we were in South Dakota and went to see Mount Rushmore with the president portraits carved out of the mountain. Not too far from the site there was "Crazy Horse", an even bigger, more ambitious, yet to be completed sculpture of an Indian riding his horse. At the nearby museum we saw many other sculptures depicting Indians in a variety of styles. And that was when the idea of making a Native American warrior came into being (Fig.03 – 07).

## Concept

Expanding on this idea, I wondered: Now, what if this warrior is made out of rocks, or partly made out of rocks? Or what if he has control over stone elements? Like a shaman with mystical powers, who has either trained for years to master this skill or has inherited it from his ancestors. Or maybe, to survive the occupancy of his land, he has learned to camouflage himself like a chameleon. And as a result, he is the sole survivor of his tribe, the last of his heritage. Or maybe he was born that way, with some sort of mutant power? These kinds of "what if" questions are what you should ask yourself to get into the mindset of thinking



Fig.03



Fig.04



Fig.05



Fig.06



Fig.07



creatively. Don't turn any ideas down at this stage, even if they seem silly at first. You're brainstorming after all. Any ideas are welcome here.

The next step is to create a direct dialogue between your raw creative ideas and images. It's time to do some exploratory drawings, sketches and speed paintings. Remember these explorations are for you and for you alone. They don't have to look pretty by any means. The goal is to



Fig.08



Fig.09

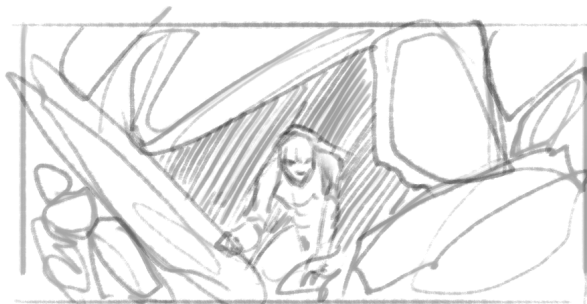


Fig.10



Fig.11



Fig.12



Fig.13



Fig.14

get your visions on paper, or on the computer (myself, I've been working straight in digital), even if they're stick figures – that's OK, as long as you're comfortable with how you do it (Fig.08 – 14).



## Sketching

So as I start sketching directly in Photoshop (using a Wacom Cintiq), I finally get to explore all these questions and ideas. Sometimes I like what I'm getting, sometimes not as much. For instance, I'm not crazy about how young the character looks in early drawings. If our warrior is really the last of his kind, then he should be older, wiser – perhaps the past leader of his tribe. And here's another idea I played with: What if he's mute or never talks? – A silent warrior, ever watchful. Just think about it; picture yourself in your car (as I was) driving across the Grand Canyon, you drive by giant rock



Fig.15



Fig.16



Fig.17



Fig.18



Fig.19

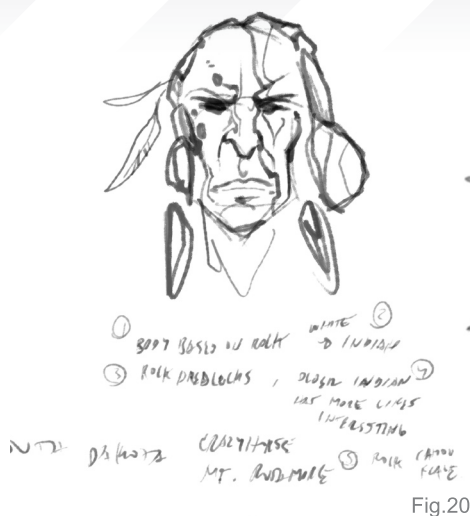
formations, and far in the distance you see a man whose skin is partly made out of rocks – or maybe a silhouetted figure, standing over the rocks, watching you. How creepy that would be? Anyway, as you go on doodling (have fun with

it!), some questions will be answered, while new ideas and questions will come up. Your brain feeds you the images and the images feed the brain. You can only benefit from this back and forth when visually brainstorming (Fig.15 – 19).



## Variations

Another thing to keep in mind is the importance of creating variations. By creating iterations over what you have previously drawn, you don't have to start from scratch on every drawing. Copy and paste your study and draw/paint over it. By doing this, you're giving yourself options. You can look at several versions and compare them next to one another. And the ones you respond to the most are the ones you are going to end up keeping. In this later stage of visual brainstorming you're now making some choices, discarding some ideas and continuing on with others. But that's not say you can't go back on it. That's the beauty of digital medium – take full advantage of it (Fig.20 – 25).





## Refining your Concept

Once you have something promising, then it's time to stick to it and spend some time refining it. And I don't mean add detail to a sketch; I mean play with the same idea but looking at it from slight different angles. Another thing that refining an image will do is to up the wow factor. Sometimes an early sketch nails an idea, but often you can come up with more dynamic/cooler ways of conveying that same idea (Fig.26 – 32).

I'm not going to show a finished design for my Native American character. This is not what this tutorial is about. Being able to render is not as important as being able to convey your ideas with clarity. Even though these were not meant for showing, when you look at these sketches, it is clear what was going on in my head. And sometimes that's as far as a concept needs to go in order to communicate to others!

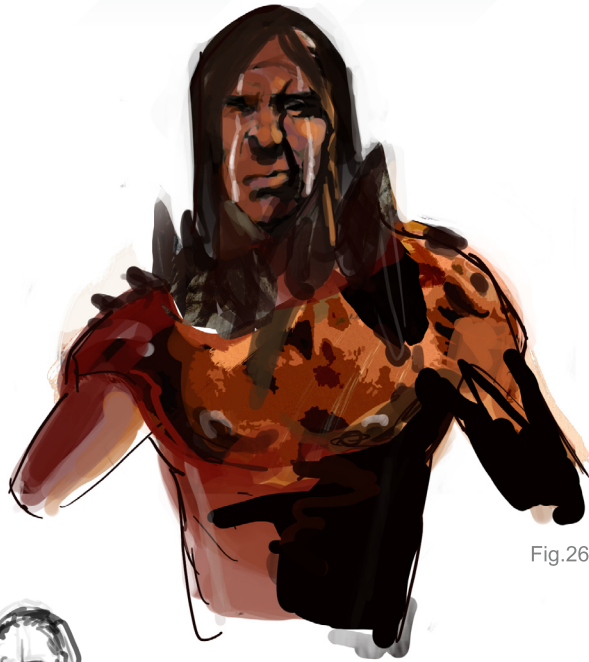


Fig.26



Fig.27

I have documented a series of thoughts/triggers/questions that went through my head, put in order, as follows:

- National parks – harsh conditions – warrior's habitat – warrior is Native American
- Rocky Mountains – rock shapes resemble human faces – warrior is partly made out of rocks – warrior camouflages among rocks – rocks are ornamental – rocks are like parasites; they grow on him – warrior controls rock element
- Warrior is young – warrior is too young – warrior is old and wise – warrior is last of his kind – warrior doesn't talk, ever
- What does his full body look like? – He should have some clothes on – he's got a bare chest – he should look more natural – warrior is butt naked – warrior has face (war) paint (scarier!) – warrior has war paint all over his body – play with war paint pattern design

And so on.



Fig.29



Fig.28



Fig.30





Fig.31

## Final Thoughts

Although I have just showed you in this article how I went about visually brainstorming a warrior, keep in mind that this is just one way of doing it. This process is very unique to each artist and varies based on the assignment. In any case, it's a very powerful tool to help you think creatively, to come up with unique ideas and think out of the box. I suggest devoting more time to it, if you haven't already. Don't worry too much about the quality of the images you're producing. Rather, witness how your brain responds to visuals, see where your imagination takes you, and enjoy the ride!

## Bruno Werneck

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Fig.32



3DTotal presents the new issue of **3dcreative**  
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## Chapter 1 – July

Introducing Photoshop's Workspace, Graphics Tablets, Screen Calibration, Color Profiles and the Brush Tool

## Chapter 2 – August

Canvas Settings, Scanning Drawings, Swatches, Colour Pickers, Colour Theory, Layers and Custom Brushes! The second chapter will drag you deeper down the proverbial rabbit hole that is Photoshop, with canvas settings and the process of scanning drawings explained, the use of swatches, color pickers and color theory covered, what layers are good for and how to work with the Layers palette, and how to make those ever useful custom brushes.

## Chapter 3 – September

Composition Rules, Sketching and Perspective, Understanding Light and Blocking-In

## Chapter 4 – October

Colouring from Greyscale, Colours beyond Blocking-In, Blending Methods and Using Photos

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Quick Masks, Using the Wand Tool, Liquify Filter uses, Layer Masks – and Painting!

## Chapter 6 – December

The Final Part: Finishing Touches, Filters, the Unsharpen Mask and Saving your Work

*Beginner's Guide to*

# DIGITAL PAINTING

This Workshop Series will look at, just as the title suggests, all the things that we need to know to get us started with Photoshop – mainly for painting, but also for other things such as matte painting and photo manipulation, which often use the same tools. We will be covering all the technical aspects of the programme, as well as some technical sides of painting that'll help us starting to swing the virtual brush!



## Beginners Guide to Digital Painting – Chapter 2

Software Used: Photoshop

### Introduction

Please forgive me for skipping any kind of “motivational speech” and jumping straight into the deep end: What we will be looking at in this chapter of the series will be a mix of more technical (sorry, we won't be able to get around this) and some artistic stuff, so I hope you've got used to your graphics tablet and had a snoop around Photoshop's Workspace in my absence to better familiarize yourself with everything.

We'll be going through Canvas Settings, how to optimize scanned drawings and sketches, use of the Layers, Colors and some basics on Color Theory, as well as using the Swatches and Color Picker, and some more fun stuff regarding Brushes, namely making your own brush sets. All this should gear you up for the next step in the digital painting evolution, and we can actually start painting.

So, how about we just get started with the chores, so we can get to the fun parts a bit quicker?

### Traditional Digitization, Transparency Settings and Triadic Tonal Values ... (because it sounds good!)

Let's start with something that is a hugely important part to digital painting, in more than one way: Canvas Settings and preparing scanned sketches for work in PS. The latter I found important to include, because most people start their artistic path on paper, and many – even after years of digital painting – still prefer to get their ideas down on paper before beginning work in Photoshop.

**Note:** From now on I will assume that you know how to navigate, click, double-click, right-click,

*and hold and drag things with your pen. Usually in PS, to use a tool you have to click, or click and hold while dragging the tool tip over the canvas. I don't know what settings you have chosen for your Pen, so all of this is up to you to know.*

Last month we briefly brushed over opening new canvases, so let's go back there and look at it in a more in-depth fashion.

After choosing File > New, you are confronted with the now familiar Canvas Settings box (Fig.01). We covered the Preset dropdown, and I would assume the **Name** option is self-explanatory. You don't have to name your file yet though if you don't know what to call it; you can wait until you save it for the first time.

Then there is **Width** and **Height** – also quite self explanatory. You can manually change the size of your canvas there. The dropdowns next to them give you a choice of doing this in pixels, inches, centimeters, millimeters, points and picas. Let's say you know you want to paint something that is 60 by 40cm, you just set it to cm and then type in 60 and 40. I personally prefer choosing pixels here, because I know how big or small a canvas size in pixels will be, and what I like to work on.

The next one is the **Resolution**. The Photoshop Standard is 72 pixels/inch (28.346 pixels/cm) – or ppi for short. You may have

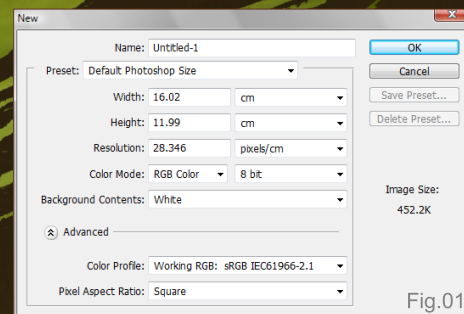


Fig.01

heard of something being referred to as dpi as well, which stands for Dots Per Inch, and generally refers to prints and is the more widely used term for this setting. So, to put this into context, 72dpi means there are 72 dots in one square inch of canvas. 72dpi is the standard resolution for images shown online – it loads fast, but still is good quality to be viewed on a screen. However, even though you paint on a screen, and most likely your images will mainly be viewed on a screen, here is something to consider:

If you were to print a painting with a 72dpi setting, the quality would be questionable, especially when printing large. Most magazines and books ask for images at 300dpi – which is the most widely-used setting for print. The image will look a lot smoother and clearer, as there is much more density in the image, more information per inch – 300 dots compared to 72. This also affects the memory needed to process such an image in PS, and to save it. Remember, the bigger a canvas in pixels as well as dpi, the more information is stored in it.

So, how big should a canvas be in pixels to be good to work on? – I cannot tell you, as it solely depends on the computer power you happen to have at your disposal. But what I can tell you is this: Anything under 2000 pixels is almost useless, unless you just want to do a speed painting or sketch that will not be used for anything but viewing on a screen. In digital painting, the phrase “bigger is better” for once is true. My preferred canvas size starts at 6000



pixels. This – at 300dpi – gives you a decent print size as well, especially if you want poster sized prints. Why not smaller? Let's say your canvas is 2000 pixels in Height, at 300dpi, the actual print size of that is only one fourth of what you see on the screen (24% to be obnoxiously precise, if 2000 pixels are 100%). Another reason is, you can zoom into your

image while painting to work on small details without having to endure a pixelated view (that's when you can see lots of colored squares on your image rather than smooth transitions), as 100% will be *quite* big.

If this was all a bit confusing, it will become clear as we go along through these Workshops. So no worries – just nod and smile. It will make me happy [Grin].

So, set your Resolution to 300 pixels per inch. – If it kills your computer, 150 pixels are also acceptable, just not if you are working for a magazine or on illustrations for a book.

The **Color Mode** simply gives you options in what mode you want to work – RGB, CMYK, Grayscale or Lab Color. Unless you are specifically working for print, in which case CMYK *may* be required, leave it on RGB. The mode can be changed at a later stage as well.

Also, you have a choice here of working in 8 bit or 16 bit mode. What does that mean? 8 and 16 bit refers to how many colors (or color gradients) you will have in an image. 8 bit means you have 256 shades of Red, 256 of Green, and 256 of Blue, which gives you – 256 x 256 x 256 – exactly 16.8 million possible colors. Quite something, hey?! Not that the human eye could actually see all these colors, but that's beside the point. This is the standard for a JPG image. Now, 16 bit ... you may

have figured already, gives you even more possible colors to work with. Namely, 281 trillion! Yep, you read that right. – You may wonder what the point in this is, if you cannot even really see all the 16.8 million of an 8 bit image. – The point becomes apparent when you edit the image, especially when working with gradients and levels. Sometimes you may have changed the levels, and later on aren't quite happy with it and want to change it back manually using the Levels Adjustment, and all you get is weird blocks of color all over that don't seem to be blended at all, especially in the darker color range if working in 8 bit mode. At 16 bit, this doesn't happen. Again, it's your choice what you want to do here, as 16 bit raises the size of your image file and your computer may not be able to handle it.

Then you can choose your **Background Contents**, and as mentioned in the last chapter, avoid Transparent. Choosing White gives you logically a white canvas, and choosing Background Color will give you whatever color is currently your background color (remember the little colored squares at the bottom of your Tools Palette?). But whatever you choose, you can change this once the canvas is open, too.

Under the Advanced section you can even set the **Color Profile** if you want it to be different from the one PS uses as its default profile – the one you set up last time – and change the **Pixel Aspect Ratio**, but that one I never use, and quite frankly don't know much about other than when it comes to printing. So I am sure there is someone far more qualified than I to talk about that. We'll just stick to Square, which doesn't mean you end up with a square canvas, but that the shape you see is the shape you get.

Now we've got our canvas settings set to what we want (Fig.01a), we can even **Save Preset** so it'll be faster to call it up again next time you want a new canvas of the same size; it's quite useful when you know you have to paint several pictures of the same dimensions.

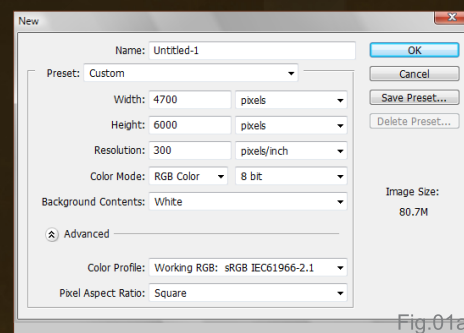


Fig.01a

Empty canvases can be daunting, and even as you progress through the years will always remain a challenge. A good one, one may hope, but a challenge nonetheless. That's probably why simple pieces of paper seem more welcoming to fresh ideas, as they are so much more familiar, as is the feel of a pencil in your hand. With time, you may become more accustomed and able to also throw down your ideas on a PS canvas, but let's stick with paper for a second. You've got a nice sketch or drawing that you would like to work on in Photoshop, so what do you do? You have three options:

- If your sketch is the same size or smaller than the active area of your tablet, you could simply lift the protective cover of your tablet, shove the sketch under it, and trace it with your pen. Here you'll just have to make sure that you make your canvas Fit To Screen in View in the main menu, as otherwise you'll be busy for a while trying to match the position of your sketch with the position of your canvas in PS. It may also be advisable to do this on a new Layer on your canvas – more to that in a few paragraphs
- Another way, and usually the more traditional one, would be to scan your drawing. If you just want the drawing as a sketch reference for a painting in which you will not see the line drawing anymore, scanning it at a relatively low resolution and quality is just fine. If however you want to keep the original lines showing through the painting, it would be good to scan the drawing at 300dpi. I'm afraid I am not able to



explain to you how to set up your scanners, as they are all different – and I don't even have one at the moment

So what do you do if you're in my shoes and really don't want to try tracing with your tablet? You grab a digital camera and snap a picture of your drawing! Make sure to do this in daylight, by laying your drawing on a flat surface (floor is usually good) while standing over it without throwing any shadows on the paper. You may also want to zoom in a bit, as this tends to eliminate the slightly warped appearance of the paper – it's a stupidity of the lens to do this. The photo option is not so good if you want to keep the lines of your drawing visible in the painting, unless you happen to own a state-of-the-art high end camera, but hey ... that's how it goes



Fig.02

If you've chosen to do one of the latter two, and have your drawing sitting on your PS Workspace (**Fig.02**), then what next?


The first thing I want to do is crop the photo, so I can get rid of everything else but the drawing. To do this, choose the Crop Tool.  Simply place the tool's tip down in one corner and drag it into the opposite corner of the area you wish to keep (**Fig.03a**). Everything that will be discarded should you choose to apply the action should be grayed out – you can even set the



Fig.03a



Fig.03b

color and transparency of this Shield in your options bar. Don't worry if it's not quite right, as the selection can be adjusted – in height, width and even rotation. You see the little squares on all four corners and in the centre of each line (**Fig.03b**)? Hover over one of these squares and you should get a double arrow showing you in which direction you can pull or push the selection line. Once your pen touches the tablet, you can do that, just be gentle with it, as an accidental double-click would apply the crop. And if your drawing looks not quite straight, you can adjust it by rotating the selection in the desired direction: hover your pen outside of the selection at any of the corners – you should see a curved double arrow appear – on the corners, you can change the size of the crop diagonally. Once you are happy with your crop selection, either double-click on the image, click the tick symbol (Commit current crop operation) in the options bar, or select a different tool and Photoshop will ask you if you want to apply the selection (**Fig.03c**).

In many cases, a scanned or photographed image may look too dark or too light, or simply somewhat washed out like mine, and we want to adjust that. If it is far too light or dark, you may want to scan or photograph the drawing again, as even Photoshop cannot fix everything!



Go to Image > Adjustments > Levels and this will open your **Levels** adjustment window (Fig.04). I find this to be the best choice for initial adjustment, as it doesn't just go lighter or darker, but lets you adjust the midtones as well – midtones are the colors in between the brightest and darkest present in your image.

As you can see, you can either adjust things with sliders, or manually by entering values. Looking at the **Input Levels**, the slider on the left works on the darkness contrast of dark colors, the one on the right on the contrast of your light colors, and the one in the middle adjusts the midtones – sliding it left makes everything lighter, and right darker. Try it!

The two at the bottom, the **Output Levels**, practically overlay your image with white or black, washing it out (Fig.04a). Good for certain thing, but I rarely use that option. But by all means, please play around with it.

Oh, and if you can't see anything happening on your image, check if **Preview** is ticked!

The **Channel** dropdown menu at the top lets you choose to adjust all colors at once, or



Fig.03c

Red, Green and Blue (hence RGB) separately. The results of doing it separately can be quite something, so make sure to have a go at that, too.

This is the basic use of the Levels adjustment, and if you're happy with what you've got, hit OK. If you don't want to adjust anything after all, simply press Cancel. You can also save the adjustments, and call them up again later by

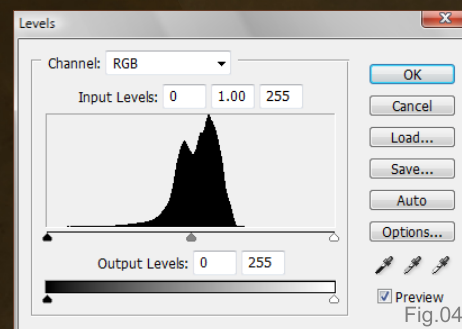


Fig.04

clicking Load.... When I save these kind of things, I tend to do so in the folder I've made for the image – I'm one of those nerds who organizes everything separately, one folder per new painting ... works a treat though, as I don't have to wade through hundreds of images to find what I am looking for.

Anyhow, there's also the **Auto** option, which I found never quite works out right. Try it ... you'll see. And then there is the **Options...** button, which I tend to find quite useful. It is a bit more refined than simply using the Auto option. I won't explain though what you would need to do there, as it would get way too long, so just play around and see what happens when you change the settings. Learning by doing (and screwing up) is still the best way to

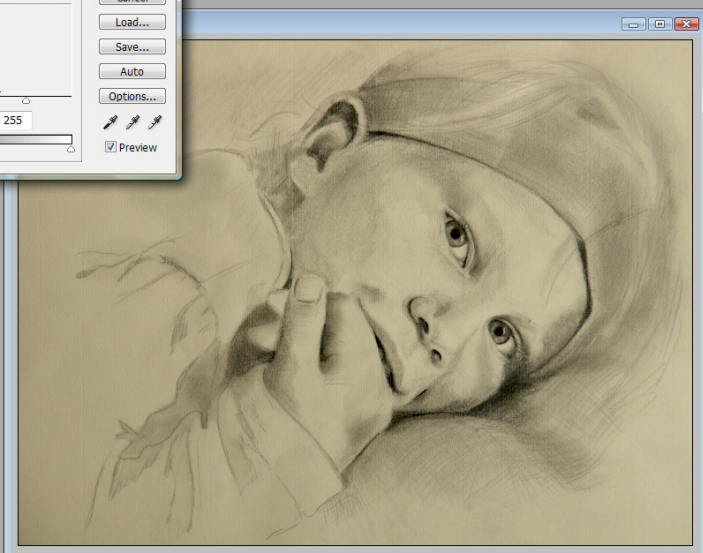
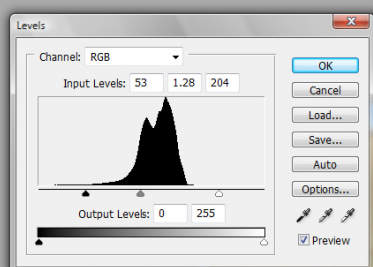


Fig.04a





learn when it comes to Photoshop. And please don't through your pen at me for saying that, even though that may have been the standard answer to all your questions every time you tried to ask something.

You may also wonder what the little pipettes are for in the bottom right: they set your (from left to right) Black Point, Grey Point and White Point, and I've found them to be highly annoying. To use them, click on one, and then click with it on your image. When setting your Black Point – the darkest shade in your picture – do not click on anything that's light or you'll end up with a fully black image, and vice versa for the White Point picker. The results of using them, to me, seem far too stark. It may work for actual line drawings, but as I don't do line drawings they are not for me. But maybe you find it great to work with them, so please do if you want to. When you're done, apply the adjustments (Fig.04b).

If you just want to use the drawing as a reference sketch for your painting, this usually is enough to let you go on your way. But if you want a really clean drawing or line art, you may well need to work more on it; for example,



removing potential dust particles that happened to have a party on your scanner bed. For this there are two tools that can prove useful: the Clone Stamp Tool  and the Healing Brush Tool. 

The **Clone Stamp Tool** does as it says: it clones things. So let's say you have a small dust spec or smudge on your drawing where it should be pure white paper, select the Clone

Stamp to cover it up. The Clone Stamp uses the same brushes as the Paintbrush, so you can actually select any brush and size, and even apply some other settings to the brush tip as well. For covering up smudges, however, I recommend the round brush tip with Hardness set to 80%, and Opacity set to Pen Pressure. To actually use your Clone Stamp, hover over an area of pure white paper, press the Alt key on your keyboard, and then set your brush down. Keep holding the Alt key down, and drag your brush over your tablet to the spot where you want to remove the smudge. Release the Alt key. Now just paint over the smudge – you will see that the paper from the unaffected area will be cloned onto the smudge. It's pretty cool (Fig.05). If you have more than one smudge on your drawing, and want to keep cloning the white paper onto the various spots, a simple way to do this without having to do the whole Alt key thing again is to un-tick the Aligned option in the options bar before you hit the Alt key for the first time ☒ Aligned. Un-ticking this box lets you clone the same area you selected for cloning everywhere on the drawing. Ticking the Align box will move your selection spot wherever you go on your drawing, keeping the distance between selection spot and tool tip "aligned".





The **Healing Brush Tool** works pretty much the same way. The only difference with this tool is it doesn't clone anything; it heals – magically adjusting the color of the affected area to its surroundings, as long as the pre-selected spot is clean as well. Try it! This is also a good tool to use when there is a lot of color variation in your drawing, and none of the colors match the spot you need to clean up.

At this point you may feel that some of your sketch lines need darkening, or the white surrounding them needs lightening. This is where the Burn Tool and Dodge Tool come in useful. You can find them in your Tools Palette, and usually the **Dodge Tool** is the default tool here – it lightens things. To choose the **Burn Tool** to darken stuff instead, simply click and hold the Dodge Tool and a small menu will pop up that lets you choose a different tool of the same category (**Fig.06**). Any tool in the palette with an arrow in the bottom right corner is one of those tools that have options.

Again, the Burn and Dodge Tool – more sophisticated in the newest Photoshop version, and not recommended for use on anything other than black and white images in older ones – work with the brush tips and their settings. You can adjust the Exposure (intensity) of the Burn and Dodge Tool in the options bar, as well as their Range, that's whether you want to burn or dodge the Highlights, Midtones or Shadows of what you are working on in a dropdown menu next to the Exposure (**Fig.06a**).

For darkening line art, it's best to choose a relatively small brush tip (round, with medium Hardness and Opacity at Pen Pressure), setting the Exposure to about 25-30%, and using the Shadows option from the dropdown menu,

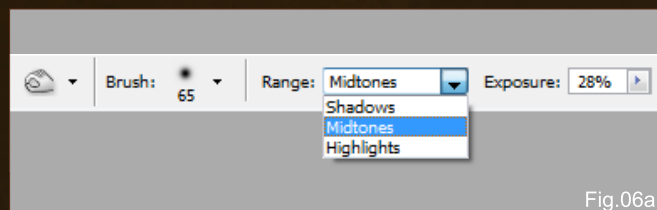


Fig.06a

as this will specifically target the dark lines. Then simply use the Burn Tool like a brush, retracing the lines of your drawing (**Fig.06b**). Keep working on the drawing with Dodge and Burn until you are happy with the result. In some cases this may still not be quite enough to ensure a great quality outcome, and then I'd actually recommend tracing the drawing in Photoshop to get cleaner line art results, and this you may want to do on a new Layer.

**Layers** are probably the best thing since cherry flavored lollipops that make your tongue turn bright red. To explain what they are and what they do, or can do, it's best to compare them to transparent overhead projector sheets. You can draw on them, write on them, paint on them, even make them different colors and change how they affect the layers below them, but they will never touch your original canvas until you tell them to. This makes them extremely useful for when you want to try something but aren't sure if it's going to work.

So let's have a look at the Layers tab. To see anything there, you need to have a picture open, so I'll stick with my photographed drawing for now. To make things easier to understand here, I think it's best I just go through all the little icons that are available in this palette, and we take it from there.

At the top of the Layer Palette, there are these icons:

• **Lock Transparent Pixels**

When you have painted something on a layer, clicking this icon locks all the pixels of the layer that have nothing on them, effectively stopping you from painting over the edges of what you've already drawn.

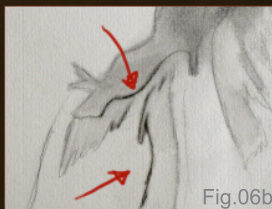


Fig.06b

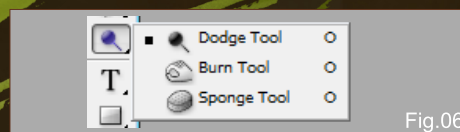


Fig.06

This is very useful when you need to texture something specific and don't want the texture spill over onto the rest of the painting

• **Lock Image Pixels**

This locks up the entire Layer, so that you cannot paint on it anymore. At all! You can, however, still move the layer around on your canvas

• **Lock Position**

This locks the layer into position, and thus won't allow you to move it around. But, you can still paint on it

• **Lock All**

Does exactly what it says on the label: It will lock everything on the layer, you can't move it, and neither can you paint on it anymore

At the bottom of the Layers palette, there are the following icons:

• **Add a Layer Style**

This is the same thing as going to Layer > Layer Style – and lets you add some nice little effects to what you've got on your layer. This mainly comes in useful in designs and typography. I wouldn't recommend using this all that much when painting, as it is usually blatantly visible that you've used a default effect rather than painted it

• **Add Layer Mask**

These are very useful for Photo Manipulation. I've never used them in a painting. Layer Masks are simple: obviously they mask things, as in whatever is behind the mask you cannot see. If you moved a photo onto another photo, but only want parts of the new photo visible, you can apply a Layer Mask and then, using your



Paintbrush and the color black, paint over everything you want to be hidden behind the mask (it will only hide the new photo parts, not the ones from any other pictures you have layered there). Painting over it with white again reveals what was hidden. To make something semi-transparent, choose a shade of grey to paint with instead. The original photo doesn't get touched by doing this, and you can delete the Layer Mask at any time should you wish. Layer Masks do *not* work on empty layers

## • Create a New Set

This adds a folder to your layers, into which you can move layers. Let's say you have ten layers, three of them are for your sky, three for your landscape, and four for your character; you can organize your sky, landscape and character layers into folders, and thus making everything look a bit more organized. It also gives you the option to hide the entire group of layers from view with one click, rather than having to hide every single one separately

## • Create new Fill or Adjustment Layer

This offers you the same options as you get by going to Image > Adjustments, but with a twist: instead of having to apply the changes (in Levels or Contrast or Color Balance, etc.) directly to the image, it keeps them on a separate layer, so should you not be happy with them anymore at a later stage you can just remove them instead of having to start over. You can also add a new Adjustment Layer by going to Layer > New Adjustment Layer – a very handy thing!

## • Create a new Layer

Take a wild guess ... You can also create a new Layer by going to Layer > Create New Layer, or by simply using the shortcut, which I tend to do. Much faster!

## • Delete Layer

Pretty self-explanatory again, I would think

By the way, you can move layers around in the palette, just by holding them and moving them up or down. In the same manner, you can drag layers into the recycle bin (to the Delete Layer icon).

Now, let's have a look at the few dropdown menus and sliders in the palette:

• **Opacity and Fill** – These are pretty much the same as the options of the same name in your Brushes Palette: lowering the percentage makes the layer it's applied to appear more transparent. This is great when painting translucent fabrics, adding subtle textures, adding depth to hair and foliage, painting water, fog, ghosts you name it! There is never any need to actually paint something translucent, all you need to do is turn down the opacity of the layer

• And then there is the dropdown that has no name (I call it **layer options**), and by default reads Normal. This one is great, too, as it gives you lots of options for you to choose how your layer appears or interacts with the rest of your painting. There is not one option in there that doesn't have any uses, and some are more subtle than others. So my suggestion to you is this: Open a picture in PS, a photo or painting – anything that doesn't just have black and white in it – then add a new layer and scribble something on it in a few different colors. Anything. Doesn't matter. Then methodically go through the Layer Options and see what each one does, and how it can be adjusted further by using the Opacity and Fill sliders

What else? The icons next to the layers ...

## • Layer Visibility

This shows you if a layer is visible or not. You can click on the icon to make a layer invisible

## • Active Layer

This icon only shows next to the layer you are currently working on. To choose a different layer to work on, simply click the layer you want to work on

## • Link Layers

Clicking on the empty squares next to the Layer Visibility icon in layers that you are not currently working on makes this icon appear, which means that the layer you are working on and this one are now linked, and for example can be moved or transformed together

Images with layers cannot be saved as JPGs, as well as some other file formats. By default, PS will save them as PSDs – and if you plan on continuing work on your painting after saving, I recommend saving as PSD – layers or no layers – as this is the highest quality you can save in.

So what if you want to save it as a JPG, to show it online? You will need to **Flatten** the image. Just go to the main menu Layer > Flatten Image. This collapses all layers into one, the Background (which is your canvas).

If you want to reduce the size of your painting in terms of memory used, or just want to make away with some of the many layers you were working on and are now happy with, you can merge layers without flattening the entire picture. You have two options here: Let's say you have some invisible layers on your canvas, because you haven't finished work on them yet but they were obstructing your view while working on some other layers that you are now finished with and want to merge, you can go to Layer > **Merge Visible**. If all of your layers are visible, and you still want to merge some, you need to link the layers



you want to merge, and then go to Layer > **Merge Linked**.

**Note:** You can only link or merge layers that are next to each other. If you link two that have one in between them you don't want to link, that unlinked layer will be moved above or below the ones you are linking. Layers always merge into the layer that is currently the active layer.

Right, with this out of the way, I think it's time to move on to something that will get you closer to actually painting something. Those of you reading this who already know how to paint can skip this whole part and go right to the end of this article, or almost the end; those of you who have no clue how to use colors, or anything to do with colors, please stay on and I promise I'll try not to make it boring.

## Basic Color Theory

Colors are lovely things. Not only do they make stuff look colorful, but they also give us signals. We apply certain colors to certain emotions or events – red is passion as well as danger, black is grief or hatred, white is purity, blue denotes peace, yellow is a warning, while green is envy as well as no danger, or go. We learned that the sky is blue, the grass is green, the sun yellow, wood is brown, and roses are red. Or are they...?

The most common thing I've seen with beginners is that they apply colors as they know them, rather than how they actually see them. And seeing colors properly needs practice. Or maybe the translation from seeing to applying needs practice, I'm not quite sure.

I won't bore you with everything there is to know about color theory, as I find that once you understand the basics you're good to go on your own way with it, and will learn by applying what you've learned.

I think everybody knows the **Primary Colors**. They are Red, Yellow and Blue (**Fig.07**). Mixing these get you three other colors: Orange, Green and Purple (**Fig.07a**). They are known as the **Secondary Colors**. Mix these again with their neighbors, and you get the **Tertiary Colors** (**Fig.07b**). The 12 colors you now have are the ones present in the color wheel. Black and white are not technically seen as colors, and I generally discourage people from using them in painting as they make things look flat and lifeless.

So the colors you have in the Color Wheel are called **hues** – them and everything in between, the full on saturated colors of the spectrum. Colors also have temperatures, and are measured in Degrees Kelvin. However, this goes a bit too far for this, and I'll just say Orange is the warmest hue, and blue the coolest.

Now, the Color Wheel doesn't just look nice, it's also useful for choosing your colors. Why?

Because the way the colors are arranged around the wheel has a purpose. Let's try it with this example: light and dark, or black and white, are opposites. Pretty obvious! The same applies to the colors on the wheel. Pick a color, and the one you find opposite is, well, its opposite – or **Complimentary Color** (**Fig.07c**). Let's say you want to paint a sunny winter landscape, which colors would you choose? If the sunlight has a yellowish warm tint, the shadows would be the opposite: bluish purple. You can also reverse this for very cold light. What about a scene by a fire? The red orange glow of the flames would cast greenish blue shadows.

So there is your very basic color theory. To refine this a bit more, let's see what else there is, in a nutshell. Color schemes are not just comprised of complimentary colors, and if we used just them for painting, we'd get very bored very soon. The next step up from that would be the **Split Complimentary** (**Fig.07d**), where you take two complimentary

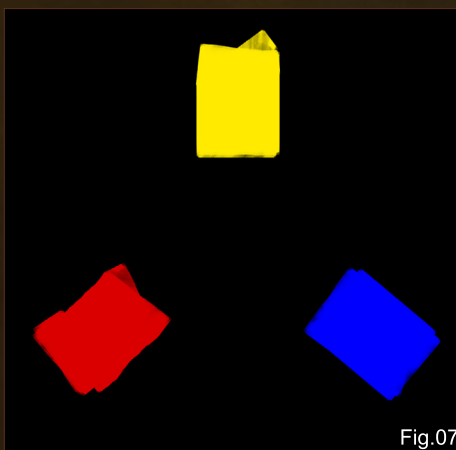


Fig.07

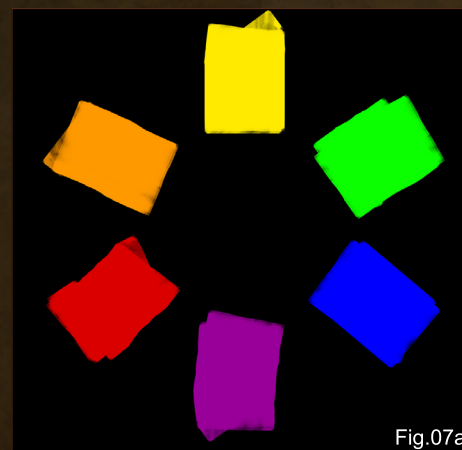


Fig.07a

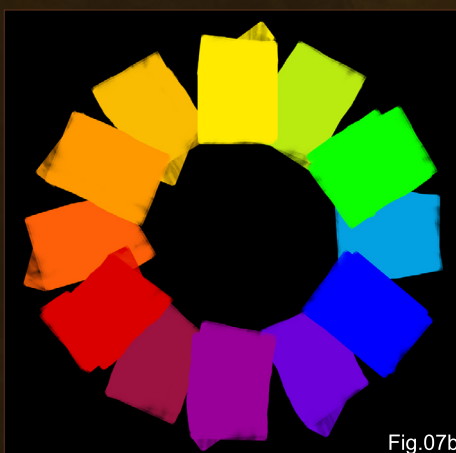


Fig.07b

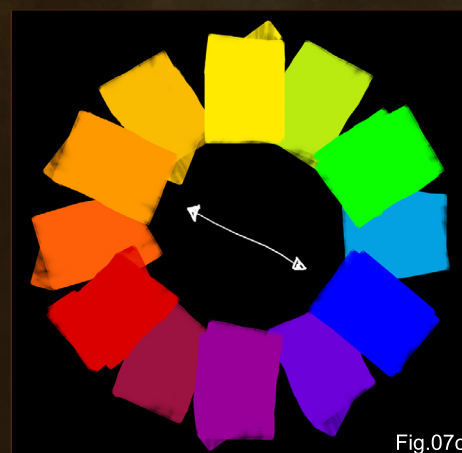


Fig.07c



colors but split one of them up. You instantly get more color variation. Then there are **Triadic Colors (Fig.07e)** – a nice even triangle on the color wheel. There's also **Tetradic Colors (Fig.07f)**, a perfect square, and the **Clash Colors (Fig.07g)**, which use two complimentary colors with one that sits in the middle of them, creating a squished triangle on the wheel.

Obviously these are all quite drastic color matches, and not too well suited for all types of paintings. But knowing about these is a good start, as they will pave the way to understanding how colors work together, or not.

The more subtle color schemes are those that could be classed as limited color palettes and give you seemingly infinite possibilities. Colors are chosen from just one side of the spectrum, and maybe have a couple of subtle complementaries thrown in to "pop" the main colors and let the image come to life (**Fig.07h**).

So what about tints and shades? – A **tint** is generally referred to as a color that has white added to it, while a **shade** is a color that has black added to it. However, unless you're painting walls, I've not really heard of anything referred to as a tint. Shade is the more widely used term for darkening or lightening a hue.

Another thing you may want to try regarding colors is to see them for what they are. There is a famous scene in the film *Girl with a Pearl Earring* where master painter, Johannes Vermeer asks his maid to tell him what color the clouds are. She answers with "White". After a short pause, she retracts that statement and names several colors which are present in clouds. In short, in



Fig.07d

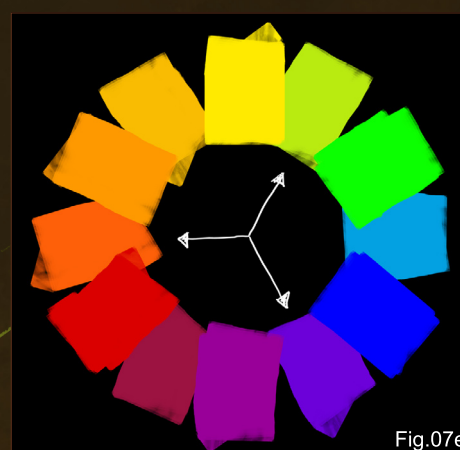


Fig.07e

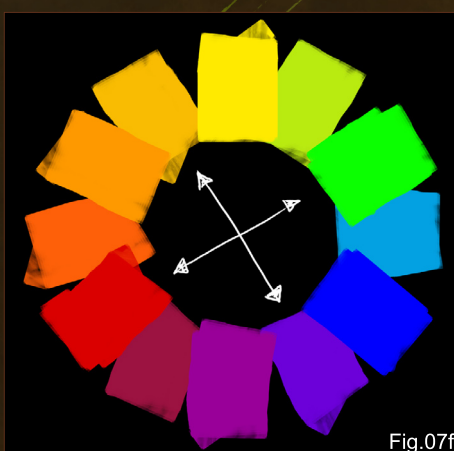


Fig.07f



Fig.07g

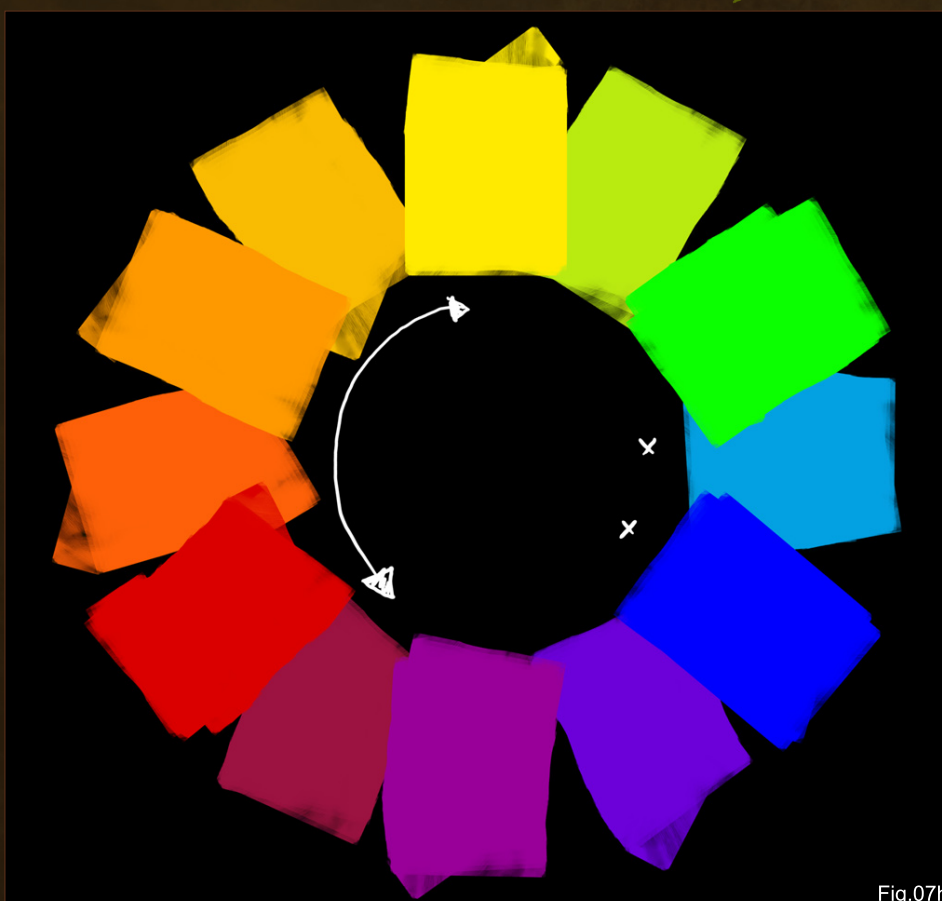


Fig.07h



nature you rarely find any pure colors, especially as light and shadows have a great part to play in it, too. During a sunny day, your lawn will look very green, but also has variations of yellow and

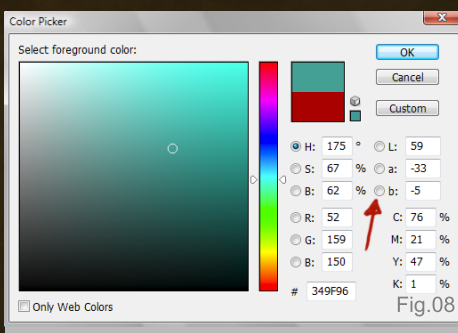
brown in it. At night, under a full moon, that same lawn will appear a deep blue green, with deep brown and hints of bright blue where the moonlight reflects off the surface. So when you think a flower is red or a cloud just grey, look again. Try to find the other colors that compose the whole.

If you have some trouble with all this, or simply are aching for a fully working Color Wheel that lets you play around and discover colors in a fun way, I recommend this website: <http://www.colorjack.com/sphere> – there you can not only go through all the “formulas” I’ve just mentioned, and see how they look, but also apply certain medical eye conditions to the color spectrum for some interesting results, as well as choose between RYB and RGB modes. And to top it off, you apparently can export your chosen colors as Swatches for Photoshop and some other programs. I’ve tried it and it didn’t work, but if it does for you, that’s great. If not, you can always take a screenshot of the page (Ctrl + Print Screen), then open a new canvas in PS and paste (Edit > Paste) the image you’ve just captured from your screen onto the new canvas. Flatten it, save it and then pick your colors from that as you paint.

Which brings me to the next topic: Picking colors. Literally!

## Color Picking

To pick colors from an image – like I’ve suggested with the screenshot of the Color Wheel – just choose the **Eyedropper Tool** from the tool palette, and just pick the color you want from an image. The options bar has

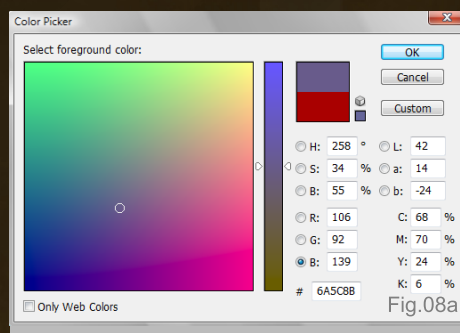


a little dropdown to adjust what your Eyedropper Tool does. You can either get a Point Sample, which means it just picks up one pixel’s color, a 3 by 3 Average, which means it gives you the average color from three adjacent pixels, or a 5 by 5 Average, which does the same as a previous, just with a wider range. I tend to keep mine on the Point Sample. You can also pick two colors by just swapping the background and foreground squares (hitting X on your keyboard to do that is a timesaving shortcut).

Another way of picking colors is of course with the Spectrum Color Picker we briefly covered in the last tutorial chapter. Open it by clicking on the foreground or background color squares, and choose your colors. You may be wondering what the little round tick boxes do next to the Spectrum Slider (Fig.08). Go on, tick one. Any one! – They give you a different choice in colors, pretty much like the website I linked earlier. It’s fun! And it’s quite helpful if you want to paint in a limited or controlled color palette (Fig.08a). To get your normal spectrum back, just tick the one labeled H.

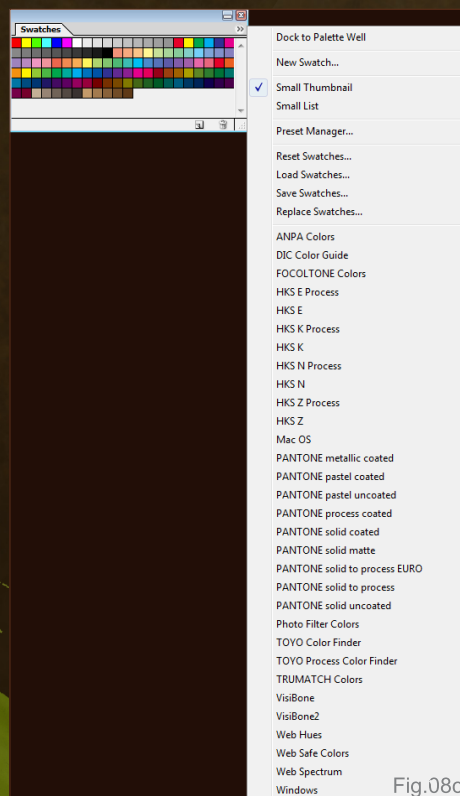
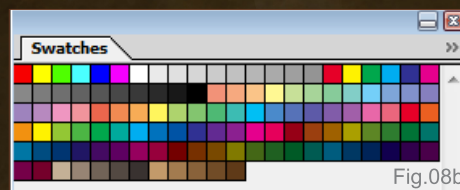
This color picker is nice, but also a bit annoying, as it does not stay open while you paint. My suggestion here is to pick your colors before you start painting, and paint them onto a small canvas which you can then save as an image to pick colors from.

Or you could use the **Swatches**. Let’s open the Swatch palette and see what we’ve got there (Fig.08b). Not much other than lots of color squares, and a small arrow in the top right corner. If you click on that arrow, you will be



presented with a rather long menu (Fig.08c). Most of it is self-explanatory, like Load and Save, and the list at the bottom are different color modes and profiles that you can load as swatches. They all have a purpose, but I’ve never found them all that enticing to use.

In the bottom right corner are two icons, both of which we know from the Layers palette: “Create New” and “Delete”. This opens up some options here: You can create your personal swatches. If you want to start with a clean palette, delete





# Beginner's Guide to Digital Painting Part 2



all the swatches currently in it – one by one, I'm afraid – by clicking on the Delete icon repeatedly. To create a new swatch, you need to first pick a color in the Spectrum Color Picker or from a picture, and then click on the Create New icon – this creates a new swatch from the current foreground color. Once you have all the colors you want in your swatches, save them so you can call them up whenever you want.

I am not sure if the newer PS versions have this feature, but Corel Painter X lets you create a swatch set from an image – in one go – essentially picking all the colors present in a photo or illustration and turning them into swatches. Very useful and time saving!

When working with the swatches, it may be useful for you to keep the palette open on your Workspace, rather than docking it to the Docking Well.



Fig.10



Fig.10a

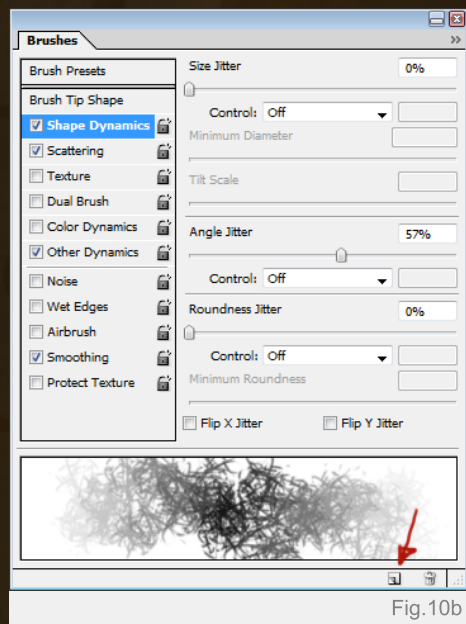


Fig.10b

Great! Now that you've heard all this stuff, let's bring our focus back to something fun. Brushes! Custom brushes to be precise.

## Custom Brushes

You may have noticed while playing with the brushes in the last chapter that there are lots of different brush sets to choose from. If not, you can find them like

this: Open a canvas and select your Paintbrush. Open the Brushes to choose your brush – and you will find that small arrow in the top right corner (Fig.09). Clicking on that gives you a menu again, with a list of your brush sets. To open one of them, you can either click on the brush set, and PS will ask you if you want to replace the existing one with the new one, or append it. Make your choice. You can also just click on Load and your browser window will pop up, letting you browse through your brush sets that way. If you have downloaded a brush set from the internet, or one came with a CD in a magazine, you can load that brush set with the Load option only, as the list only shows brush sets that are currently saved in Photoshop's Preset Brushes folder. Of course you can move new brush sets into that folder prior to opening PS: Program Files > Adobe > Photoshop > Presets > Brushes.

Now back to Custom Brushes.

Making your own brushes and brush sets is really easy. You can turn virtually anything into a brush, from scribbles to photos and scanned textures, fabrics or dead insects if you like.

To start a completely new brush set, you need to delete all the brushes that are currently loaded in your palette. – No, not the brush sets

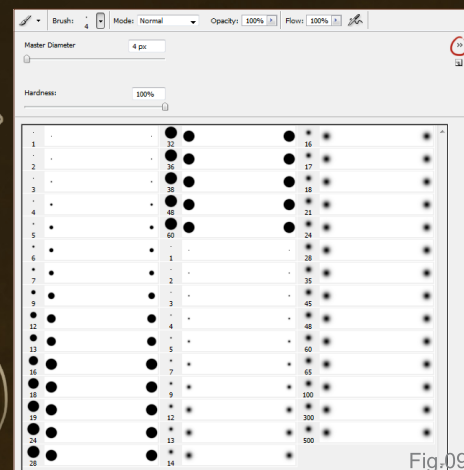


Fig.09

in your Photoshop folder! Sadly there is no fast way to go about doing this. You need to right-click on every single brush and choose Delete. Once you've done this, you can start making your brushes.

The best way I have found to go about it is to convert whatever you want to turn into a brush to grayscale (Image > Adjustments > Desaturate) first. Brushes by themselves cannot tell if something is in color or not, and will only work with whatever colors you have set as your foreground and background colors. Plus, converting an image to grayscale gives you a good chance to adjust it for optimised brush usage. If you are using a photo of some cracked cement, for example, to turn into a brush, you may want to soften the edges of the photo slightly (paint over them with pure white with a soft brush), so that when you use the brush it will not have a rectangular photo shape.

Let's see ... here's something I've scribbled (Fig.10). I like it as it is, as I think (no, I actually know) that it will make a useful brush. If you wanted to, you could overlay this with some more textures, or add bits and pieces to it. Next, I make sure to make it very close crop, using the Cropping Tool. This makes sure that the brush created won't have any excess empty space surrounding it. To create the new brush, just go





Download your Free Brushes to accompany this tutorial [here](#).

to Edit > **Create Brush Preset...** and there it is (Fig.10a). You can now use it like any other brush, and change its settings as you wish in your Brush palette. You can even save it with new settings, for example if you want it to rotate and scatter, just click on the "Create New" icon (Fig.10b) and a new brush will be created, settings included. Great, hey?!

Once you have created your personal brush set, you will want to save it. Just open up your Brushes again and call up the menu, and click on **Save Brushes**. This will not overwrite anything you already have – PS knows that something has changed and will let you rename the brush set every time you save one.

**Notes:** When using Vista, it will not allow you to save brush sets in the Brushes folder, for some extremely stupid reason (unless it's just my computer being stupid?). You can save your new brush set in any folder you want, and also

call it up again from that folder, or once saved move the brushes into the Preset Brushes folder.

*Also something to remember is that older versions of Photoshop may not be able to work with brushes that were made in newer versions, especially not when you have anything below CS. Another thing is that the biggest size an image can be to be turned into a brush is 2500 by 2500 pixels. I'm not sure if this has changed in higher PS versions, so my apologies if this is inaccurate.*

Because I know it can be a bit hard to figure out which brushes may be very useful for painting, and which may not be, I've created a brush set for you with the basic brushes most often used in painting. Over the next four installments I shall add new brushes with every article, depending on what we'll be working on at the

time. To download your free brushes with this tutorial simply click on the **Free Resources** icon.

## In Closure

Let me just say that if you've come this far, I'd urge you to stay on and wait for the follow-up chapters, as next month we'll actually be starting to sketch and paint, look at composition and perspective, and useful tools to help you draw architectural things. For now, however, I really need a break ... Would anyone care to make me a coffee?

## Nykolai Aleksander

For more from this artist visit <http://www.admemento.com/> or contact [x@admemento.com](mailto:x@admemento.com)



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"The notion that it would be a frontal depiction of the character was decided upon early on, I just wasn't sure of the story behind it or the color scheme at the beginning."

# A NEW BRIDE

Making of *By* Roy Stein

Roy Stein, painter of beautiful women tinged with the gothic and the macabre, talks us through his Photoshop painting process in this month's making of article, based on recent gallery feature, *A New Bride*. Inspired by a statue of the grim reaper, and driven by a desire to keep his artwork unique and in keeping with his original concept, discover the techniques behind the art of Roy Stein.



## Making Of 'A New Bride'

**Software Used:** Photoshop

Hi, my name is Roy Stein and I am a VFX artist and illustrator based in Tel Aviv, Israel. In this short "making of" article I would like to share with you the process of creating a digital painting from the basic idea to the final artwork, using my recent image, *A New Bride* as the basis for the explanation.

### Concept

With this particular piece I started from the basic idea of a dark portrait of a beautiful woman combined with some gothic/horror elements – which is a genre I already love working with and have much experience in. The notion that it would be a frontal depiction of the character was decided upon early on, I just wasn't sure of the story behind it or the color scheme at the beginning.

On a visit to one of London's cathedrals, I saw a statue that gave me the inspiration I needed. It was an early 18th Century depiction of the grim reaper covered by a semi-transparent cloth. This obviously blew me away, and so I immediately sat down to work and came up with the concept of death's minions delivering a girl.

**“...a smaller canvas allows you to work much faster with little or no lag.”**

### Step 01

I started by opening a new document in Photoshop – a tall composition due to the nature of the artwork's subject (a medium portrait). At this stage you might want to work on a smaller sized canvas, bearing in mind that this stage is for finding the lines and composition, and a smaller canvas allows you to work much faster with little or no lag.



Fig.01

I usually draw the main character and the background elements (the grim reapers, in this instance) on separate layers, as that way I can play around with the positioning until I'm happy with the layout. I find that working with a blue color allows me to sketch the main forms in the best, without being distracted too much at such an early stage – probably something I've kept from my early animation studies, using blue pencils.

After spending around 20 to 25 minutes sketching I merged down the image layers, and ended up with the line art all on one layer, above the white background, using the Hue/Saturation tool to convert the blue lines to black in preparation for the next step (Fig.01).

### Step 02

The second stage of the process, and perhaps the most important, was all about the color



**“I hardly ever use  
sophisticated textured  
brushes...”**

palette and overall tonality of the image. I created a new layer underneath the line art layer, and with a large soft brush started to build up the general color scheme.

Now this is my favorite stage, because everything you do here will more or less set the feel and look of the final piece. I chose brownish/greenish tones that were very sickening, and provided a great contrast to the human skin tones that I wanted to use for the girl. Right from the start I knew that typical white sheets on white skeletons would be too common and not very interesting at all. And what I was also looking for color wise was a way of framing the girl that would support the line art composition from the earlier step (**Fig.02**).



## Step 03

In this next step I switched to a smaller brush and increased the hardness all the way up. I hardly ever use sophisticated textured brushes, I find that you can get a lot from the default circular and chalk brushes, providing you keep changing the softness and Pen Pressure to suit your specific task.

I created a few color swatches for the skin tones of the girl, and started to lay down some color. I immediately saw that the peachy skin color shifted the delicate balance of the image contrast, so I decided to go with a dark hair color for the girl, and to compliment that I created a vignette using the same color on the tips of the wings (**Fig.03**).

## Step 04

At this point I totally got rid of the line art layer, and started to render out the details on the girl's dress and the reaper minions. I was careful not to go into too much detail here, and to keep as much of the original color palette as I could.

When painting in Photoshop, you have to find the way that's comfortable for you of refining the form. I know a lot of illustrators out there use smudging to achieve the smooth result of a finished painting, but I usually

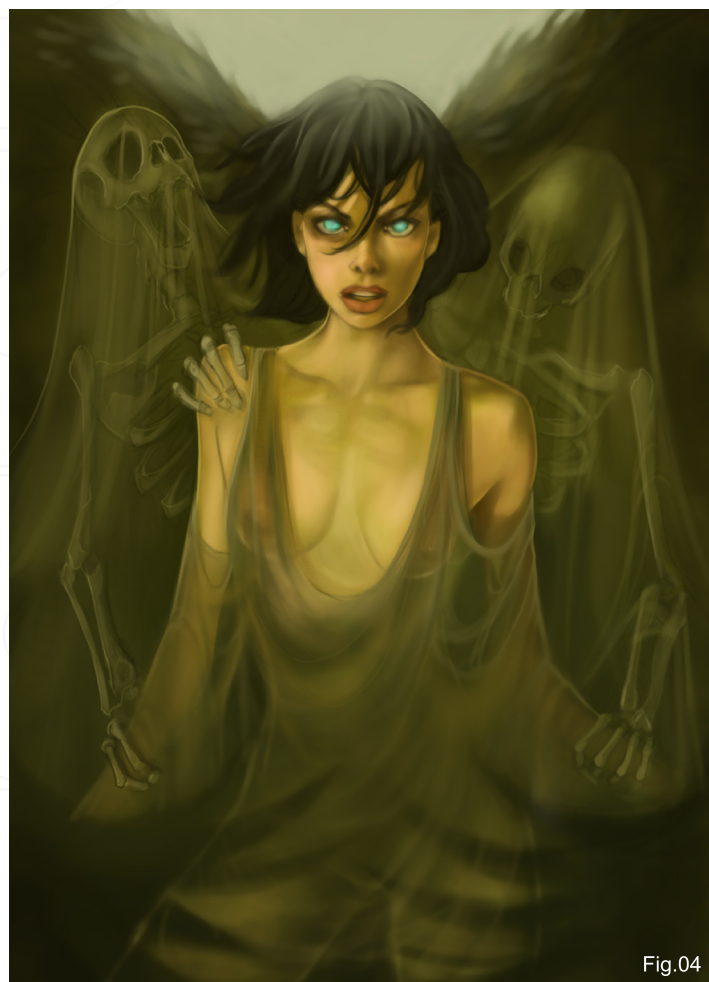


Fig.04

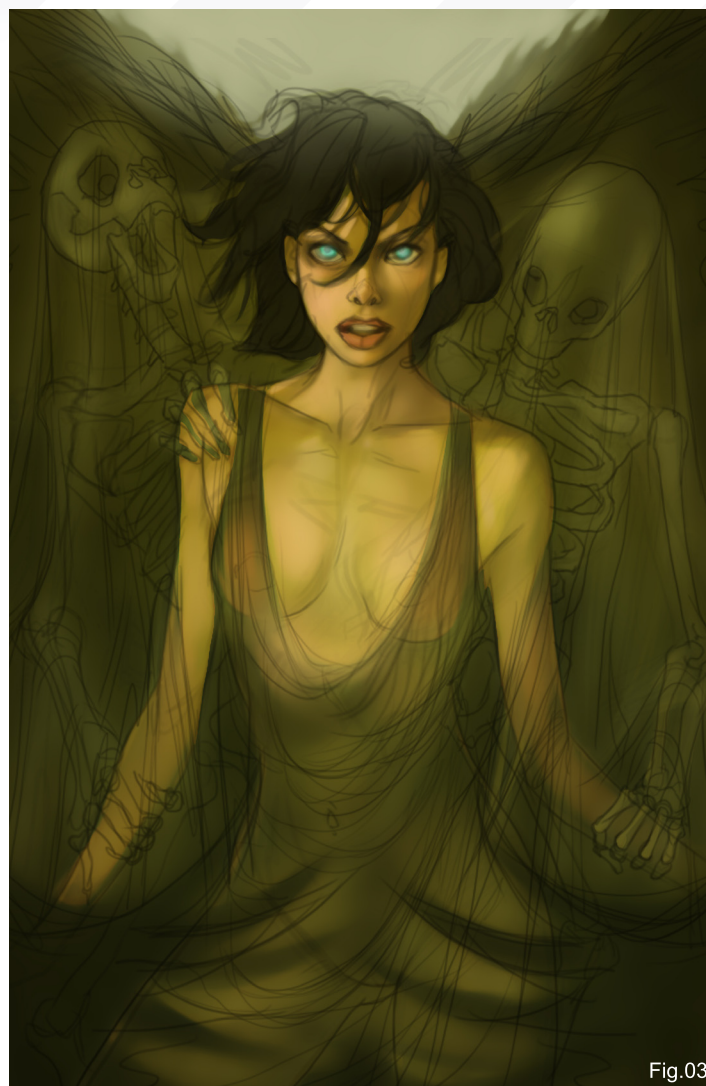


Fig.03

prefer to glaze blurred layers to achieve a similar effect – it gives me more control over the final look, and lets me keep the hard edges of the areas I want to be kept “punchy”. I used this technique for areas such as the wings and her lower body, which helped a bit by taking the focus away from those areas and keeping focus on the face (**Fig.04**).

## Step 05

The last step took the most time and was basically a stage of adding more and more detail, such as the falling feathers, and lots of refinement and detailing of the girl's face. I felt at this late stage that the colors were a bit off and didn't quite feel right together, so using Curves and Color Balance adjustments, I pushed the red values of the entire image so that it was still monochromatic, like I wanted at the beginning, but a lot warmer and more unified (**Fig.05**).

I hope this walkthrough has been helpful to you and that it will give you some inspiration for your own digital painting endeavors. Please feel free to visit my gallery or drop me an email with any questions. Thanks for reading!





## Roy Stein

For more from this artist visit

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Roy Stein  
Fig.05



# DIGITAL ART MASTERS VOLUME 4

With the release of 3DTotal's latest book, *Digital Art Masters: Volume 4*, we have some exclusive chapters for you...

This book is more than just an artwork book. Not only does it feature full-colour, full-page images, but each artist has given a detailed description, in their own words, of the creation process behind each piece of published artwork. And they've done it especially for this book!

This month we feature:

**"The Village"**  
by Andrée Wallin







The following shots of the "The Village" book pages are featured here in full-resolution and can be read by zooming in...

## THE VILLAGE

BY ANDRÉE WALLIN

SOFTWARE USED: Photoshop CS3



### INTRODUCTION

The Village was created as a concept for a friend and colleague of mine.

He was in the making of a World War II tank and needed an environment to place it in, so he asked if I could create something for him. I had

recently looked at some of John Wallin's work on *Gears of War* and I had fallen in love with his ability to create winter scenes with a very loose and yet clean style. I really wanted to try something similar with this particular scene, and my goal was to create an environment that had been touched by war, but also something colorful and with a nice feeling of serenity to it, since most WWII pieces are very desaturated, gritty and dark.

### WORKFLOW

I chose to do a "matte painting concept", which means working with real photos but still keeping it pretty rough around the edges to save some time. I found a really



good photograph taken by Paul Stevenson that I used as a plate (Fig.01), and started by blocking out the changes I wanted to make to the composition (Fig.02).

Since the original photo is sepia toned, I created a few layers with mainly blue and orange colors and played around with the blending modes until it started to look

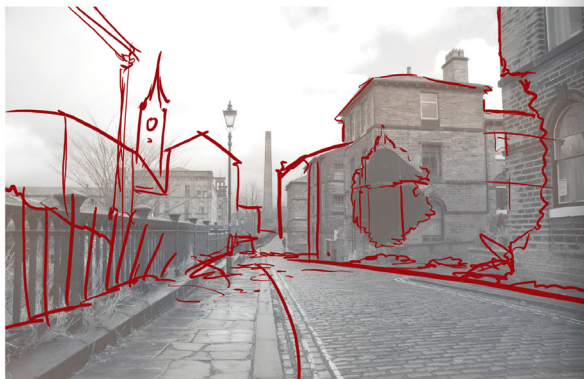


Fig.02

interesting. I also started painting some snow, looking for some nice values (Fig.03). After that I copied and pasted some parts of the image and used the Warp tool to reshape them; for example, the road was too straight for my taste, so I made it a little curvier (Fig.04). The Warp tool is really helpful and I use it frequently.

After that I continued working on the snow and the little town square in the middle (Fig.05). I kept it very loose with a simple round Photoshop brush. There was no need for custom brushes on this one – I actually rarely use custom brushes for my concepts. Since I used a plate for this one I didn't have to spend that much time on the composition and could go straight to figuring out the lighting, which I think is the best part of this image. I was actually just playing around with a gradient layer set to Screen that made the top of the buildings highlighted, creating the feel of an early evening. I really liked it.



Fig.04



Fig.05



Fig.03



Fig.01

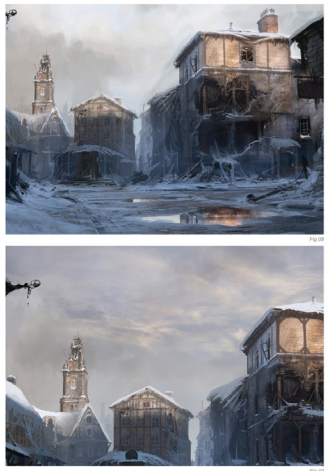
so from then on it was just a matter of finding the right values for the shadowed areas and starting work on the details.

If I'm working on a high end render or a detailed matte painting I always use tons of layers, but when I have a tight deadline, and if I'm doing a concept like this one (one day), I never use more than four or five layers at once. I flatten the image every now and then throughout the process, just to force myself not to go to crazy on the



details and to keep it simple and efficient. As you can see, the brushstrokes are very rough in some places; it's just a matter of fooling the eye to make it look detailed (Fig.06 - 07).

I was starting to see the end at this stage (Fig.08), basically just working up the details from here on in. The big advantage of working with a winter scene like this one is that you don't have to worry that much about tons of different values; once you find the right tone for the snow you can use it pretty much over the entire scene. And as you can see, I found this pretty early in the process. I picked out two very similar values to work with, and for the final image I also integrated a few photos of real snow (taken by me) (Fig.09a - b), along with a great image that I found on cgltextures.com for the sky, to give the image a more authentic effect (Fig.10).



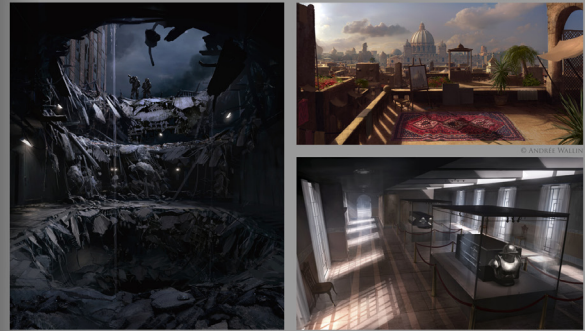
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#### CONCLUSION

This was a really fun concept for me to do: I found a good plate rather quickly, the process was smooth, and the result pretty much what I aimed for. There's something about post-apocalyptic scenarios that really speaks to me. I love the serenity and the beauty of destroyed civilizations. Everything looks so peaceful and calm, and that's what I hope people will feel when they look at The Village.

#### ARTIST PORTFOLIO



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## DIGITAL ART MASTERS: VOLUME 1, 2, 3 & 4

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